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ABSTRACT

The following essays are presented in this monograph: (1) "Report on the 1983-84 Ford Faculty Seminar: Fostering Intellectual Growth, A Developmental Perspective" (Nancy Hoffman); (2) "Teachers Observing Teachers" (Francis R. Hart); (3) "Teaching Improvement and Teacher Evaluation" (Howard Cohen); (4) "Course Rhythms, Learning Structures, Teaching Styles" (Francis R. Hart); (5) "Successful Learning without Confidence: Unexpected Contributions to Pedagogy from Recent Psychoanalysis" (Neal H. Bruss); (6) "Asking Questions in the Classroom" (Nancy Hoffman); and (7) "Writing a Syllabus for Commuters" (James H. Broderick). (JD)

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Teaching at an Urban University

Papers from the
Ford Seminars in Teaching at UMass/Boston,
1983-1987

Edited by James H. Broderick

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at the University of Massachusetts at Boston

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PREFACE

All the authors of the following essays have been associated in one way or another with the Ford Faculty Seminars on Teaching. Those Seminars are one major effort of the Center for the Improvement of Teaching at UMass/Boston to focus attention on teaching and to foster improvement. (The Seminars are described in some detail in the first three essays.) The other activities of the Center have been a Ford Colloquium series that brought important educators to campus for discussions with our faculty, and an occasional publication, *Scholarship in Teaching,* in which most of the essays first appeared. In addition the Center has offered consultations with individual faculty and with groups, and videotaping of classes.

The Center has been funded for four years jointly by the Ford Foundation, the President of the University and the Provost of the Boston campus. I want to express my thanks to the Ford Foundation for its timely and imaginative grant and in particular to Sheila Biddle, Program Officer for the Division of Education and Culture, for her years of patience and help, and to Gladys Hardy, who originally encouraged Howard Cohen and me to propose a Center. I want also to thank President Knapp, whose generous support was promptly and simply given. Former Provost Greene was from the first, enthusiastic and helpful, and to him the university owes the decision to continue the operations of the Center wholly under university auspices. In addition, I want to express my appreciation to Rus Hart, who first gave me the idea for the Seminars, and to Howard Cohen, who helped devise, establish and direct the Center. Professors Susan L. Gore, Arthur P. Simonds, Michael F. Gibbons, Jr. and Robert Crossley and the more than sixty faculty participants in the Ford Seminars, although their explicit comments are not included in this volume, have all made contributions. I hope a succeeding volume will find room for their judgments and advice. Finally, I am grateful to Bernadette Connolly for her skill and good humor in preparing this MS for the printer, and to Rus Hart for proofreading a portion of the MS. The remaining errors and idiosyncrasies in format are, however, mine alone.

James H. Broderick

Professors attentive to their students' intellectual growth need to take into account the discordance between their view of learning and the students', the competing interests in fostering individual development and "covering" material, the varying needs for pedagogical theory and practical advice, and the way students reflect their stages of growth in their evaluations of faculty.

Report on the 1983-1984 Ford Faculty Seminar: Fostering Intellectual Growth, A Developmental Perspective

Nancy Hoffman

Introduction

Fostering Intellectual Growth: A Developmental Perspective took as its goal to test, critique, and adapt if appropriate the insights of writers concerned with the intellectual development of students. The distinguishing idea of the Seminar was that one might improve one's effectiveness as a teacher by charting the student's experience in the classroom, and particularly by attempting to understand the student's relation to competing intellectual perspectives, her grasp of the "relativity" of truth. This emphasis on student learning rather than on faculty performance is useful to academics. Caught up in the intricacies, puzzles, and pleasure of their disciplines and specialties, faculty too often see the improvement of teaching as a refinement of the lecture and underlying research than as an improvement in the techniques and processes which help students make sense of intellectual problems. The teacher might help her students more by figuring out the thought patterns, conceptual worlds, and degrees of contradiction in a lecture or assigned essay than by adding to her reading list the new literature in her field. She might study her own syllabus, keeping in mind the successful high school student who has learned to list and categorize, but never to analyze and interpret, or the middle-aged student

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who can interpret and judge in the work world, but who is baffled by academic writing and talk.

The centerpiece for the Seminar was the work of William Perry, who is best known for devising a scheme of student intellectual development in *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years.* Other authors included Carol Gilligan (*In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*); Blythe Clinchy and Claire Zimmerman, scholars who have adapted and revised Perry (MS in progress); and David Kolb, who has discussed Perry in his writing on experiential learning. Because the most disturbing shortcoming of developmental theory as it now stands is its failure to weigh social class, culture, and age as factors in the developmental scheme, and thus to acknowledge its own politics, the readings included as well an intensely political corrective – the theory of radical educator Paulo Freire (*The Pedagogy of the Oppressed,*) and a Freire follower, Ira Shor (*Critical Teaching and Everyday Life.*) These suggest to the developmentalist that the problem of education for adults may not be only one of stages of growth, but also one of gaining freedom to name and own reality on one's own terms, not those of the powerful.

The model for the project, described by Joseph Katz (*Teaching as Though Students Mattered,*) combined the summer Seminar with a series of fall and spring classroom visits. Pairs of Seminar participants, along with the Seminar leader, attended each other's classes to take notes, observe, and critique each other, and to discuss the work of students. While the focus was again student development, comments on and revisions of classroom practices were wide-ranging. It is important to note that the Seminar participants came from UMass/Boston's three colleges – Arts and Sciences, Management, and Public and Community Service – the latter located several miles from the main campus. The arrangement of visits sometimes presented complex scheduling problems, but even so most pairs visited each other regularly. The project held several meetings during the year and a luncheon during the semester break. Unanticipated outcomes include the participation of Seminar members in recruiting a new class for the Ford project's second year, a proposal to make a film about the evolution of a college class, and a perceptible heightening on campus of enthusiasm for discussing and improving the teaching process.

Participants

The five men and five women in the seminar represented the three Boston campus colleges – Management (2), Arts and Sciences (4), and Public and Community Service (4). Of the ten, three were in their 30's and untenured, three were in their 40's, three in their 50's and one nearing retirement. Three taught literature; other specialties included personnel practices, management

systems, sociology, photography, problem-solving, social work and housing, and law. Two of the group had been at UMass since its beginning in 1965; three had arrived only the previous semester as the result of a forced merger between UMass and Boston State College.

The diversity of their fields was paralleled by their atypical careers. The lawyer, a black woman, had gotten a UMass BA at age 32, then completed law school and returned to teach. The social worker had had a long career in government and continued to be very active in public service. The personnel specialist had been in the ministry, and continued a career as a businessman. The photographer worked at a Boston shelter for the homeless and was contemplating going into social work school. (A year later she took a leave of absence from UMass, worked at the shelter, and was accepted in the UMass Human Services MA program.) It should be noted, however, that the lawyer, social worker, and personnel specialist teach at the College of Public and Community Service, a small college for urban adults which seeks faculty who are both practitioners and academics.

In their letters of application, several participants identified two persistent problems: the first they attributed to students -- their passivity, their unwillingness/inability to think critically, to argue; the second they saw as their own incapacity to deal with increasing diversity of student competence in a single classroom. (These two problems emerged at the top of the list for the second year's Seminar as well.) Some persons also had very specific, and as it turned out later, accurate analyses of more individual teaching problems like the need to organize and focus, map a route for each class; the need to link technical tools with broader value questions; the need to help students see error as interesting and provocative rather than as simply "the wrong answer." One untenured person said frankly that his teaching evaluations were just average, and he wanted to improve them. Others had achieved reports of "excellent" and "outstanding," but were motivated to join the Seminar by their own fascination with the teaching process and by the high standards they set for themselves.

The Summer Seminar

The Seminar met six times, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of one week and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the second week, for four hours with a break for lunch. Participants were assigned readings prior to the first meeting, and were also asked to interview two students using an adaptation of a questionnaire developed by Blythe Clinchy and Claire Zimmerman. The data from these interviews provided grist for an initial discussion about student development and tested the Perry scheme in a very informal way. Could we hear students who were in Perry's terms still dualists, students who were

pushing us as teachers to give them the one right answer? How did students think about epistemological issues? How did they search for truth?

Quickly a camaraderie developed in the Seminar. These seasoned professionals were eager to commit themselves publicly to improvement, to describe plans that went awry, to help each other think through failures. For several, the anger boiled up on political questions: how could one change in fourteen weeks the habit of mind most students brought to the classroom, the obedience to authority, the seeming reluctance to engage in debate on tough issues, the "banking mentality" (in Paulo Freire's phrase) acquired in most previous education? What could one do to force the administration to take seriously in personnel decisions UMass's own public rhetoric about the importance of teaching? Some of these tensions were dramatically heightened by the acknowledgement that one person had joined the seminar hoping that others would persuade her not to leave teaching.

The Seminar was best when we dealt with specifics – the student interviews, the descriptions of courses to be revised, and the individual presentations of a single lesson from a course. (Most participants brought in a brief piece of writing or an exercise, and actually simulated the class experience with the others acting as students.) There were longer presentations from the two Seminar members whose teaching was based on an established philosophical/cognitive approach – an adaptation of Freire and a version of the Wodich-derived problem-solving technique in which students think aloud about the thinking process.

What emerged from the Seminar, aside from the new pleasure for many of being able to talk about teaching rather than one's discipline or academic politics, were numerous themes which are revealing of faculty attitudes, problems and questions. Most striking were three: the contradiction between the importance of schooling to the student and its importance for the teacher; the tension between wanting to "cover" some traditional quantity and type of material and recognizing that one single text well-taught and understood might more satisfactorily enhance student intellectual growth; and, finally, the tension between genuine faculty interest in theoretical writing on teaching (as yet difficult of application) and the urgent need for more mundane writing on techniques and processes for the classroom.

Themes

Among the questions on the Perry-adapted questionnaire were a set which pertained to students' perceptions of the role of learning and education in their lives. These included the following: "What do you think will stay with you about your experience here?" "Has being here changed the way you think about yourself or the world?" "In your learning here have you come across

an idea that made you see things differently. . . or think about things differently?" The culminating question of the set is: "Looking back over your whole life, can you tell me about a really powerful learning experience that you've had, in or out of school?" With the exception of one student interviewed, each recounted a learning experience outside of the classroom. A striking though not uncharacteristic experience recounted by a student, for example, was his being sent as a Marine Corps race-awareness mediator onto a ship where there was racial tension during the Vietnam war. A second student recounted being bused to a white, very suburban high school from her all-black neighborhood.

How can school compete with such experiences, we asked ourselves? (There is a partial answer in the Perry scheme to be discussed below.) How do we reconcile the importance *we* attribute to literature or photography or the latest management systems with the students' view? Particularly for urban adult students, and for many younger students living at home and trying to survive on piecework jobs, the moment in the classroom is almost ephemeral. Even with an excellent student's full concentration for the forty-two hours of a fourteen-week course, the impact must necessarily be seen as part of some larger, evolving sense of self and vocation. One interesting irony of Claire Zimmerman and Blythe Clinchy's work at Wellesley with students who have the luxury of dedicating themselves to their own learning for four years is that, indeed, those who develop a sense of independence and commitment usually do so toward the end of their four years, and then by the act of rejecting all that went into attaining excellence as a freshman, sophomore, and junior, by striking out on some course which is "incorrect" in the success scheme, but correct by the inner light.

While all the faculty in our Seminar knew intellectually the lesson of the interview question – that most powerful learning experiences are broader and more multi-faceted than anything that could conceivably go on in the classroom – they still challenged themselves to create an environment that would change some aspect of their students' lives. Indeed, each in her way set a standard which would have students experience a *revelation* in class. I choose the word carefully, and the language of the teaching history that several Seminarians recounted bears this out. So, one puzzle for the faculty development experts should be how to help faculty develop realistic expectations: how much growth can be achieved in a semester's course and by whom. (One possibility suggested by the Perry scheme is that, by interviews and short essays, we could at least place students developmentally in the first days of class.) Committed teachers are often overreachers, optimists on every first day of class, and in these characteristics are the seeds of despair.

To go back for a moment to what we heard in the student descriptions of powerful learning experiences (beyond their location outside of school),

one of us pointed out that a large number of these experiences derived from forced recognition of difference. The white soldier had never understood how white he really was until confronted with black soldiers angry about discrimination. The black student bused to a suburban high school understood not just race, but social class for the first time. The Perry scheme suggests that students grow intellectually in situations in which they are obliged to recognize competing perspectives on a single issue or problem, and even more when they must act despite the persistence of dissonance and contradiction. Both of the students mentioned above were recounting situations where a profoundly understood sense of self and identity was achieved by confronting racial and class difference. If Perry is correct, teachers can rarely construct such challenging experiences of difference in the classroom, although the notion of intellectual contradiction as *necessary* to student growth is perhaps the most useful in the Perry scheme.

The formulation of the second theme of the Seminar – covering the curriculum versus teaching one book well – is a form of debate over knowledge versus skills. On one side are those who would argue for some broadly defined liberal arts context which society must pass on in order to have a sense of itself, some shared identity. On the other side are those who argue that society is so glutted with information and ideas that the best we can do as educators is help students achieve the skills for sorting out and evaluating what they hear, read, and see; teach *how* to think rather than *what* to think about. Although there are no post-secondary programs to my knowledge in which process and method are required and content (if one can make such a division) is entirely arbitrary, there are a growing number of programs which emphasize a variety of increasingly complex thinking skills and support the skills side of the debate.

Most of us would not have thought about skills teaching had we not been confronted in the last decade by so many underprepared students, and yet their groping and "error" have taught us much. The Seminar revealed a spectrum of views on this topic as well as some serious issues regarding faculty power over curriculum. At one pole is the management systems instructor whose textbook is chosen by his department, who must meet standards of accrediting bodies and employers; at the other pole is the teacher in a general humanities course who could, if he wished, teach the *Odyssey* or *The Invisible Man* for fourteen weeks. For the former, or at least for his department, to major in Management is to master a set of content requirements or be flunked out. Indeed, there is a certain departmental pride in explaining how many can't make it. For the latter, the choice is bewildering and not easily resolved. (How does one pick two novels after years of teaching ten?) And furthermore, were reading lists cut in half leaving time for skills, few faculty would feel confident that they knew how to identify and *teach* skills of analy-

sis, the habits of thought of a discipline, the structure of argument, although these are second nature to academics. Thus one description of the School of Management's problem-solving approach to basic skills was received like a palliative. Here was a technique for skills teaching which might be adapted to the discipline-based course; here also appeared an envy, for example, of the lawyer's assignment to teach legal reasoning after a method developed in her college. The puzzle here for the faculty development experts, if our small sample is representative, is how to provide faculty with concepts and language for skills teaching (not the in-vogue writing across the curriculum) which they can integrate with their traditional readings, a process only now beginning; and, as important, how to acknowledge the multi-faceted debate over the reading list (how much, what emphasis), and allow more experimentation.

The third theme might be posed as a question about the Seminar topic itself: is developmental theory or any theory of use to us in the classroom? Here the answer is mixed. For one of us, the answer is yes in regard to Paulo Freire, but that is because of a political and philosophical affinity for Freire which encompasses classroom relations, but goes far beyond in regard to one's definition of human intellectual freedom. That faculty member "translates" Freire for the classroom by insisting, for example, that his students write papers about the assigned novels or plays before there is any discussion of the work in class. His rationale – that the student must puzzle out meaning without the guidance of authority (the teacher). But teaching as a form of doing the work of liberation or *conscientização* describes the work of a small band of academics scattered throughout universities and community programs in the United States and South America. For others, Freire is remote, a moralist who indicts our privilege as dominant elites, who leads us to say of ourselves as teachers standing before our seated students making, in Friere's language, "deposits" in the "banks" of their minds, that *we* are the oppressors. This is not exactly what many of us believe or want to hear.

Less abstract and certainly less openly political is the work of Perry and his adapters. Yet here as well, aside from a certain recognition of the minds before us in the Perry stages of development, we were stymied in our attempts to translate the scheme into classroom practice, except by embracing the important truth discussed earlier, that students grow through moral and intellectual dilemmas the experience of difference. Posed as competing truths, these dilemmas can help the student move from her search for right and wrong to a more complicated suspension of the need for an authority's truth, to the acceptance that the TRUTH may never be hers although she must choose a truth anyway. Perry also helps us in understanding why some students who seem so annoying in their persistent requests that we tell them what *we* want ought simply to be accepted as dualists, in need of time and nurture. The Clinchy, Zimmerman, Gilligan critique of Perry adds a new dimension

by suggesting that for women (and perhaps for some cultural groups, we suspect,) the scheme is inappropriate. What Gilligan calls a "narrative of relationships and responsibilities" as opposed to a "logic of rules and rights" distinguishes female from male thinkers, and leads us to recognize how much more work of this sort is still to be done.

What these serious, committed, open-minded faculty really sought are techniques and materials which, while more general and intelligent than most curriculum guides, are closer to these than theory – the School of Management's problem-solving technique, the Ira Shor description of a dialectician's critique of the classroom chair and the hamburger, an article on asking questions in the classroom taken from the Harvard-Danforth Center's *The Art and Craft of Teaching*. The problem then for faculty development experts is to make more widely available to college faculty the modest, but eminently useful writings on materials and techniques appropriate for college students. What we should seek are not the grand theories or schemes, but studies like Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations,* which explains brilliantly the hidden logic in students' writing errors, or Ann Berthoff's *The Making of Meaning*. (Such work has come first in the writing field, but we need to be on the lookout for it in other fields as well.) We need to hold workshops for faculty on such discreet aspects of teaching as the student-teacher conferences – an art in itself – or the writing of useful comments on the essay or research paper. We are in need of a more extensive practitioner's literature, if I am judging correctly my Seminar's thirst for practicality.

Classroom Practice

The goal of the Ford project, the improvement of classroom practice and student learning, is evident in each of the final reports of the participants, but also evident are the myriad and individual ways in which participants used the readings, the discussion, and visits. To say the obvious, one may argue convincingly that there is a craft of teaching – techniques, processes, structures separate from each discipline which the novice may learn; but teaching is so much the extension of character, so inseparable from one's way of being in the social world, from one's values and politics, that similar techniques adapted by different teachers produce very different results. The writers of the reports attended the same Seminars, in some cases even visited the same classes, yet each took for herself from the offerings the ideas that were continuous with an already well-formed teaching self. The participants responded to the project the way students would, were they not under the threat of grades: to use the Piagetian terms, they assimilated much, but accommodated only what the organism could use for the next step in change and development. Thus one person worked on planning, process, and questioning,

another the development of contextual thinking, and a third on the transferability of certain skills.

The reports are self-explanatory in relation to classroom practice, yet some particularly interesting observations and experiments deserve highlighting. For several participants, the Perry scheme focused the teacher's attention on the student's entire collegiate experience, rather than on fourteen weeks in a single class. This seemed to help put in perspective what one could expect from English composition or geology or accounting. Secondarily, it reminded the teacher that he needed to know more about what went on in other classes, to know his student in the midst of a UMass education not just in a math course. Several Seminar participants took the bold step of focusing more directly on the thinking, writing, arguing process, some by cutting out chunks of the syllabus, others by trying to be as explicit about *how* an idea works as they are about *what* the idea is. The risks involved are considerable. As one participant testifies, even in a course which announces itself as about problem-solving, the transfer from puzzles and problems to his newly designed unit on work met with only limited success.

A reader of the participants' reports will spot immediately that the pairing of faculty for the purpose of visiting each other's classes yielded mixed results, largely because of visits which required commuting between the two campuses and still meeting one's own teaching schedule. One group had fewer visits than we wanted, and individual conferences with me about specific classes, papers and exercises were not a fully satisfying alternative.

Perhaps most heartening about the visiting process is the consensus about what was happening in particular courses. One example obliquely mentioned in a report is that of "giving the students more responsibility for their own learning." What two observers noticed in different visits to the same class was that the teacher asked and often answered his own questions; furthermore, the students often seemed to misunderstand the significance of the questions themselves. Students were engaged in a guessing game, the outcome of which remained obscure to everyone but the teacher, and the teacher was working very hard. With some specific new techniques suggested by two visitors, the teacher turned to class exercises which engaged the students with each other in a process of defining and critiquing goals. As the students began to seek answers themselves, the teacher relaxed, listened, and commented, helping the students to rely on their own resources, and learning much about their capacities that previously had been a mystery. As the Seminar participants had observed earlier when critiquing his model lesson, this teacher was often offering unawares concepts, perspectives, and even vocabulary that appeared to be beyond the ken of many students. He communicated a love of ideas, but not the ideas themselves.

One footnote to our Seminar follow-up meetings deserves space here.

Several participants commented with some bitterness about the uses made of student course evaluations. While no one would suspend the practice of student evaluation, the Perry readings and visiting process highlighted their limitations, both as an aid to faculty development and for the purpose of personnel decisions. With the Perry scheme in mind, one would expect particularly from students in the first years of college resentment and anger at the teacher who refuses to give them the right answer; — who has carefully hidden, in the student view, the criteria by which grades are handed out. Such a student may write on his evaluation form, "I couldn't figure out what Professor X wanted" or "He graded high just for opinions he agreed with." Personnel evaluators may translate such comments to signify that Professor X is capricious in grading and unclear in lecturing. But the Perry scheme suggests that such a student comment may simple reflect a student with an as yet undeveloped capacity for contextual thinking, a student who expects authorities to tell him the "right" answer. If Perry is right, even if Professor X polishes up his lecture on the causes of the Civil War, the student will continue to feel cheated, and to report his dissatisfaction. Professor X needs help not in organizing his lecture, but in understanding his students' capacities; he may need to remind his students frequently and with considerable explicitness that experts disagree. He may need to provide exercises comparing differing perspectives; these help students experiment in weighing conflicting evidence. The personnel evaluator may also have to consider that although students complain, they are engaged in a process of growth of which one must take the long view. Systematic interviews with students during a course accompanied by written observations from trained faculty observers would provide a much more comprehensive picture of what is *really* going on in Professor X's classroom.

Furthermore, even the "best," intellectually sophisticated student rarely appreciates her teacher's attention to a group of students with their varying capacities and interests. My interviews with such a "good" student reveal that she describes the course as if it were a tutorial session designed for her alone. Reviews, clarifications, examples, she will label "boring" and "repetitive"; and they are, to her.

At CPCS with its human-services, helping-professions theme, although many faculty make explicit the collective nature of the work of learning, students complain impatiently about the diversity of the classroom. Many are unwilling to wait for slower learners or help them. The competitive nature of our educational system, the heavy warnings about plagiarism and "doing your own work," militate against students explaining complex ideas to each other or coauthoring papers.

In our discussions about personnel review, the Seminar group did not intend to excuse poor teaching, but rather to emphasize that the student course evaluation must be seen as a commentary on the student as well as on

the teacher, and even then as only one source of information about classroom practice. Although we came to no formal resolution on this issue, I believe most of the Seminar participants would welcome a university which established an atmosphere in which classroom doors are open, in which colleagues trained as observers regularly sit in on classes, and where much more is known of the educational portrait of each student evaluator. Indeed, those Seminar participants who interviewed their students at intervals throughout the semester – and one need talk only with two or three students – adjusted their courses according to what they discovered, a practice which should be encouraged.

Conclusion

The project described represents for me a solid improvement in classroom practice at UMass/Boston. There is nothing particularly unusual here, except perhaps the focus on student development, but such projects while easy to replicate are all too rare. That many postsecondary institutions continue to pay faculty year after year for teaching, an activity to which some are indifferent, at which many are incompetent, and for which most have had no training, is a puzzling matter. That personnel decisions are then made at least partially on the basis of performance in this activity is even more peculiar. I would urge all colleges and universities to expect their faculties to know the best work about teaching and learning, to become apprentices to effective teachers, and to regard student achievement as of at least as much value as their own research.

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Pairs of faculty members acting as observers of each other's classes can find ways to exploit the complex, challenging, distracting and helpful activities involved in every class.

Teachers Observing Teachers

Francis R. Hart

Our current concern with ways and means of improving teaching in the college is a fine thing, so long as we do not lose sight of three propositions. First, we are not yet very clear about what it is we would improve – namely, what teaching is, what it can be, should be. Second, we will mislead ourselves if we think that there is some single model or essence of effective teaching and hence some one direction for improvement. Third and most important, what should matter to us is not teaching but learning. Our end must be the improvement of learning, and improved teaching is merely one means to that end.

In our recent discussions of the improvement of teaching, one assumption is regularly made. To improve, teachers need the help and support of other teachers. Teachers need to consult regularly, over an extended period, with other teachers. Teachers need to observe other teachers at work, be observed by them in turn, and share their observations, reflections, and recommendations. Again, such an undertaking is a good thing, so long as we do not expect it to be easy, comfortable, simple, or quick in results.

For nearly two years I enjoyed the opportunity to observe approximately one hundred class sessions taught by sixteen different teachers from

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nine different departments. I am still trying to learn how to do it and what uses to make of it. It, of course, is not a single operation, but, like any other process of "observation," a complex of numerous interrelated acts. It is not learned quickly. It is not a panacea. But it is well worth doing and learning how to do.

A class session is a complex socio-linguistic event, a cultural organism in action. To understand the nature, the problems and processes, of observing any such event, any such organism, we really need to be taught by a cultural anthropologist. Short of this, however, we can anticipate some of the warnings we might receive. And through heeding them, we can become better prepared to be useful observers of teaching. No outsider, no occasional visitor to the ongoing intellectual community of a class, can hope to understand very fully the internal processes, the codes and interactions, of that community. No mere observer can fully understand the roles of participation in the class. And this is an important limitation, for the roles of participation control what happens in a class and how such happenings are perceived and responded to. Moreover, the very presence of the observer, however quiet and withdrawn, is an intervention that alters the situation, changes what is being observed. As one participant at a recent Ford Colloquium argued, "To observe a class is actually to observe a class being observed."

Nor can the observer become a participant in the full sense and still function well as observer. We hear of teachers who in fact "take" other teachers' courses, become students, but to do so redefines the observer's perspectives and goals. Even the occasional observer may be seduced by the exhilaration of "being a student again," may allow that exhilaration to form or color his assessment of the class and its teacher. But this is very different from the experience of an actual student. For the teacher-observer as temporary "student" is actually a self-directing learner here, free, unresponsible, selecting and interpreting information according to his own long-established intellectual habits as a scholar-pedagogue.

Also seductive to the observer is the impulse to think "what I would do if I were teaching this class." "If I were you," he tells the teacher, "I would do thus and so." But of course "I am NOT you." The observer's pedagogical behavior follows largely from his own intellectual make-up as adapted to and for his own disciplinary and intellectual priorities. He cannot "be" the teacher. He does not carry the immediate responsibilities of directing the class, and cannot share or fully realize the teacher's priorities and aims.

Finally, it is well to remember the obvious truth that observation is not an end in itself. Its very nature is a function of its purposes and preconceptions. We observe what we want or need to observe. If our aim is identified with some such general goal as "the improvement of teaching," we look for defects or obstacles, try to diagnose them, and hypothesize remedies. We

observe as pathologists, studying the processes of teaching in terms of what is wrong with them. We attend to abnormal pedagogies, hardly the best way to understand normal pedagogies. Good teaching is not the absence of bad teaching.

But if we do not focus and motivate our observation in this way, how then do we focus it? What do we look for? The problem is that there is far too much. Moreover, what matters most in the processes of a class is what is least observable: that is, the quantity of learning that results. Thus, the first step logically would be for the observer to study evidence of learning in the students, then form hypotheses as to what might cause it to happen or obstruct it from happening, and then to observe the classes. Unfortunately, the chronology of observation is the reverse. First we observe, analyse, interpret, assess the teaching, and then later on we have access to the results. Ironically, the teacher is trapped into the same chronology.

But these warnings notwithstanding, we can train ourselves to be sensitive and useful phenomenologists of the classroom. First I will catalogue some aspects of a class session that can be to some extent observed. Second, I will propose a simple and feasible model for scheduling a semester's program of observation and consultation. Finally, I will underline a few pitfalls and advisories.

Aspects of a Class Session

The several categories of perspective on a class session recalled below are probably not exhaustive, and they are certainly not original. Nor are they mutually exclusive; in fact, their shifting interrelations would provide an interesting subject for study on another occasion. They are hard to separate analytically during and even after observation. They do not add up to a single, uneclectic model of everything that "happens" in a class. But they may be suggestive for the inexperienced observer. And every class session, as sociolinguistic event, has them all.

Most observably it has its human ecology, and the ecology matters, however little we can control it. The physical-temporal setting matters: time of day, room size and shape, air (or lack of it), light (or dark), surrounding noise, furnishings, apparatus, and clutter. It matters how the people of the event use or misuse this environment: their uses of space, access, positioning, distances, mobilities. I wonder how many teachers have thought, "If I had a different kind of classroom, I could teach this class better." I wonder how many have shared my troubled sense of the anonymity and transciency of "my" classroom. For it is "mine" and "ours" only during the assigned fifty or eighty minutes. Often we must wait for another class to vacate, leaving behind not just their enigmatic blackboards and empty cups, their forgotten

notebooks and odd hand-outs, but also an aura of the otherness of their subjects and pedagogies. My class begins and ends, and abruptly I must suspend all interactions with and among students to make way for another mysterious group. It is haunting to visit a "school" where the teacher stays home in one room. It is instructive to observe how one of us enters the foreignness of a college classroom and performs the several ceremonial gestures (spoken, unspoken) of taking temporary possession and re-establishing community. All of this has its impact on learning and teaching. And, while the teacher may need few reminders of the ecology, the reactions of the observer may well help to understand and use it better.

Every session has its logics as well. Sometimes these are conscious on the teacher's part, sometimes even on the students' part, but sometimes neither. The session has its intellectual structures, orders, sequences, its texture of governing ideas, its proportions, connections, transitions, planned or not. Some teachers regularly signal to the class what these are; others (ill-advisedly, I think) take them for granted. Teaching is, among other things, a composing process. How much and how manifestly structured an effective class must be is an open question. The observer can at least keep track of the structures or logics that are communicated, and report them back – occasionally to the teacher's surprise.

Whatever they are, the logics can be communicated only in language, and every session can be "observed" linguistically. Certain prevailing kinds and levels of language are used by teacher and students; sometimes they are similar, sometimes quite distinct – even separate or divisive. For the student, every class is a process of learning the teacher's language, and every teacher is willy-nilly a language instructor. But not many teachers in my experience are very aware of the languages they use. The observer can hear and report the relative degrees of difficulty, formality, technicality, the dominant syntactic forms. Certain revealing key phrases echo through a class: "you will remember that," "the next step is," "on the other hand," "by the way," "this is important," and so on. What kinds of questions does the teacher habitually ask: questions of fact, opinion, inference, judgment, definition, exemplification, analysis, synthesis? What kinds of answers are most often given?

Logical structures and linguistic styles can be observed and described. If, then, one feels the need to evaluate them, one does so rhetorically. Every session has its rhetoric: certain forms and methods are used to achieve certain ends – informative, explanatory, persuasive. After all, the teacher is seeking to persuade the student of the significance or value of what he or she is communicating. To carry out these complex aims, the teacher uses certain tactics and methods: assignments, exercises, demonstrations, examples, analogies, and motivational appeals. The observer can learn to observe and report the ends and the appropriateness of the means.

Logical, linguistic, and rhetorical patterns do not, of course, emerge in a human vacuum. Every session also has its dramaturgy and its sociology (my humanist biases tell me they are closely related.) An observer trained in the study of group behavior has an advantage, but we are all sufficiently familiar with dramaturgy to be useful observers of how members of a class play their roles and how they interact. We can record such phenomena as pacing, voicing, non-verbal behavior and communication, the class dynamic, its degrees of intensity and involvement. We can catch cues of student types – age, sex, ethnicity, ideology, personal style. We can observe how the teacher uses authority (or power) and what kinds, interpret the politics of the class, the directions and commands, invitations, judgments, rewards, and threats. Again, teachers are often surprised, sometimes dismayed, to learn how they behave. And some are troubled or at least perplexed by the problems of pedagogical authority, and require help in learning how to present themselves in ways they consider legitimate. (It is only fair to remember that students have similar problems.)

To a limited but useful degree, all of the above dimensions of a class can be "observed." The final two I would identify are far more matters of inference.

Every session has its curricular contexts, some in the mind of the teacher, others in the minds of the students. The class has (whether recognized, acknowledged, exploited, or not) its relations to larger designs, other courses and areas of study, other disciplines, levels of learning and development, academic goals and values, extramural preoccupations and influences. No class is an island. What uses *are* made of such foreign relations, and how many, can be observed. What uses and how many *should* be made is a legitimate issue of strategy and priority.

Finally, every session has its effects, cognitive and otherwise. Indeed, the outcomes are what matter! But how are these to be observed? What manifestations or clues can be noted? Most teachers, I am sure, have ended a class with the frustrated consciousness that "Things went well. I did all I could. Students seemed attentive, interested, responsive. Nevertheless, I have only rough hunches of how much and how well they learned." Too many have limited their efforts at finding out to the periodic, "Does everyone understand?" or "Are there any questions?" – efforts that normally produce almost no useful revelations. There are far more ways of finding out than most teachers use during a class session. But these ways take time in class. And some teachers unwittingly cling to the assumption that the time needed for teaching leaves no time in class for finding out what is being learned. This is a matter for discussion elsewhere. Meanwhile, the observer can only try to catch the clues and report them, and try to help the teacher find and use more adequate ways of discovering what has been learned.

There is, then, much to be observed – *too* much, you may well say. It is neither possible nor necessary to observe all of these aspects of a class simultaneously. The observer would do well, in consultation with the teacher, to focus deliberately on a few that seem most important or problematic, and to focus on one at a time in a schedule of class visits. It sounds like an ambitious program. But it need not be as ambitious or time-consuming as it sounds. If it were, few teachers would manage to sustain such an undertaking. And there is no point in setting forth a program of observation and consultation that is simply not feasible.

A Model for a Semester's Observing

So let me now turn to the crucially practical question of how much is enough. Let me describe in outline one model of a manageable one-semester schedule that will, I believe, prove both sufficient and feasible. I am assuming that a course-load reduction for the participants, however desirable and justifiable, is not often likely. I also assume that team-teaching arrangements – in many ways the most promising of models – are seldom possible. My schedule assumes a pair of teachers observing each other and conferring with each other. It begins a week or two before first classes, and ends a week or two after finals. For each of the pair, it requires a total commitment of about twenty-eight hours.

Schedule for the Observer
(About 20 hours)

1. Pre-semester. Ask the teacher-to-be-observed to provide an audio tape of a class held during the previous semester in any course. (The advantages and difficulties of video tapes deserve discussion, but so far I have had no direct experience with them, nor am I convinced that they are necessary.) Study the audio tape as an introduction to the teacher's habits of language and design. Study the teacher's proposed syllabus for the upcoming course. Confer with the teacher on both of these items. (Approximately three hours of work.)

2. Second Week of Classes. (There are, of course, advantages and some disadvantages in observing the first week; beginnings are important, but they are also difficult and sometimes confusing. I won't try to discuss them here.) Visit two classes *in a row*. Write up descriptive notes to share with the teacher. (A written journal is crucial.) Hold a consultation within a day or two of the observed classes. (Total about four hours.)

3. Fourth Week. Arrange and attend a group meeting with several other pairs of teacher-observers, to discuss the process, its problems and possibilities, and to address the difficulties together. (Approximately an hour and a half.)

4. Sixth Week. Repeat Week Two. (Four hours.)

5. Seventh Week. Arrange for the observed teacher to administer a confidential mid-term student evaluation sheet, to be studied and discussed by teacher and observer. (A more ambitious variation would be to schedule interviews at this time with a carefully balanced sample of students.) The more modest and realistic version would take an hour and a half.

6. Tenth Week. Repeat Week Two and Six. (Four hours.)

7. Post-Semester. Study and confer on the teacher's end-of-course student evaluations *and self-evaluation*. (About an hour and a half.)

Schedule for the Teacher
(About 5 hours)

Conferences with the observer, as listed above.

You will notice that this model does not call for the observer to read course materials or examples of student work. Such additional commitments would add much time, and would require courseload reduction. While certainly desirable, they are not indispensable.

Probably the most feasible form of this model would have each person playing both roles, that is being observed by the partner and acting as observer of the partner. This would entail a commitment from each of about 25 hours. Less than two hours a week on average. It is enough to be useful and productive. But this much is necessary.

Warnings and Advisories

Do not expect too many results too soon. Let me underline (and even repeat) certain pitfalls and certain advisories.

1. The observer of classes finds it necessary to play a mixture of roles: to be a student again, to be a peer, a colleague, a resourceful consultant, a critic. It is difficult to play all these roles at once, but it must be done, and practice and patience are required. Do not expect quick efficiency or sensitivity.

2. Like any other activity of observation, this one is conditioned by preconception or bias. It suffers inevitably from mixed cues, missed signals, incontinuities, and so on. Moreover, the observer's presence alters the situation; students may behave differently; the teacher is affected (sometimes unexpectedly), feels apprehensive, works harder, teaches *to* the observer, and so on. Plan on this. Allow for it. Be candid about it.

3. There are, as we have seen, many aspects of a class to observe. Some can be better attended to outside of class (course structure, materials, exercises, assignments, etc.) so that during class one can focus on other matters. The observer should probably decide in advance what to focus on.

4. Class sessions differ. Classes belong to continuities, developments; their impacts are cumulative. Different kinds of materials, different topics and objectives, are uppermost at different stages in a course. The observer cannot be there every day. Visits should be scheduled so as to achieve some continuity, but also some variety, and some calendar-spread (early, middle, late).

5. Two tempting extremes ought to be avoided – and it is not easy to avoid them. Becoming a student once more can be one of the most delightful and revealing of the observer's experiences. But too much absorption in "content," too complete a yielding to the charm of "being a student again," has to be resisted. Otherwise, the observer cannot be very useful when viewing the course from another teacher's perspective.

Also hard to avoid, but necessary to resist, is an infatuation with the group dynamic. Of course the social dynamic of a class has a substantial effect on learning and teaching, and it may also be a useful reflector or symptom of what learning is going on. Even though many students and some teachers think that a "good class" is identical with a lively, cooperative group dynamic, it is only one, limited indicator.

6. Teachers feel "isolated" and are eager to talk over teaching with other teachers. But when it comes to class observations, they have mixed feelings. They find that they are accustomed to the "isolation" and even cherish it. Some are surprised to discover that they are nervous or defensive about being observed; few are unaffected. Teachers come to the experience with well-established images of themselves as teachers; positive or negative, they are used to such images and rely on them. But often they are largely unconscious of them. And so the process of observation-consultation inevitably causes a growth, sometimes painful, of self-consciousness.

7. Teachers, willy-nilly, think of teaching as "performance," and they have

been strongly conditioned (like their students) to seek positive judgments, "good reviews," of their performances. A desire for judgment short-circuits or prevents the need for understanding, as it does when our students seek grades and then slight or overlook explanatory comments. (It is remarkable to discover how much we teachers are still the students we once were.) But understanding has to come first; until one understands what goes on in learning-teaching interactions, one cannot make or receive meaningful judgments.

8. Many teachers believe their chief frustration or anxiety is that they have little sense, during a class, of what learning and how much is going on. The observer can do little by way of remedy, except to encourage the teacher to design and use instruments for finding out, and to use them in class frequently. Many teachers will then complain that they "haven't time." They may have to change, but they are slow to change, and change will encounter much resistance. To some degree we are all prisoners of our own metaphors of coverage and habits of assignment.

9. Teachers seem relieved to hear that there are numerous different personal "styles" of teaching, and they come to prize and defend such a pluralism. Yet some also harbor the notion (perhaps unrecognized) that there is a single model, or perhaps a small number of models, of Good Teaching. Becoming conscious of both pluralist and absolutist models, they understandably feel conflict, conflict that is remarkably similar to what students feel at the stage of intellectual development when simple absolutisms and pluralisms first confront each other. It is hard to correlate individual diversity of style with general models or criteria of effectiveness, but we must try.

10. Most of all, it is difficult to make the consultations of teacher and observer candid and specific. It is difficult for teacher and observer to free themselves of the peer-personnel-review mind-set, and to build up a new kind of trust. Ford Seminarians have sometimes complained that peer consultations are seldom "critical," are too often vaguely "nice." We want specific critiques, but we also fear them. We need supportive and constructive comments, need to be reassured that it is okay to be ourselves (again, very much like our students.) Observer and teacher both should expect the building of effective consultation to be slow and uneven. Meanwhile, the observer can be helpful in bringing the teacher *to a fuller* perception of what actually goes on in a class.

Aims and Tactics of the Observer

So, in closing, let me summarize my own aims and tactics as observer.

1. I share with the teacher my own concrete perceptions (as descriptive, as non-judgmental, as possible) of what went on, logically, tactically, dramaturgically, stylistically, during the class. I offer a process-analysis, the perceptions of one observer.

2. I suggest to the teacher how he or she appeared to be perceived by and responded to by the students in the class, and what significances I inferred from student behavior.

3. I attempt to guide the teacher into a fuller, more analytic understanding of his or her own individual goals, priorities, methods, and of his or her characteristic strengths, and of how better to exploit or utilize those strengths.

4. I help the teacher to recognize, articulate, diagnose what the teacher believes to be the problems or defects in the class session. These are sometimes, I feel, mistaken, misperceived, or misunderstood; but the exploration of misperceptions and misunderstandings is often a way to enlightenment. (This has become a principle of my own teaching.)

5. I "brainstorm" with the teacher about tactical options in dealing with those problems or defects. *Note that this has to come last,* even though some teachers understandably want it to come first. Otherwise, we are forced into a band-aid approach. And, while first aid is certainly a legitimate part of the whole process discussed in this report, it is not a main purpose. The main purpose is to set in motion certain developments in self-awareness and professional experiment that may well take a long time to mature.

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Universities separate teaching improvement programs from personnel evaluations for pragmatic and theoretical reasons, but they need not see that separation as absolute.

Teaching Improvement and Teacher Evaluation

Howard Cohen

Conventional wisdom has it that faculty development or teacher improvement programs must be isolated from academic personnel processes if they hope to succeed. The kind of evaluation that goes on in such programs is of a different order and serves a different purpose than the kind of evaluation that occurs in personnel reviews for appointment, reappointment, tenure, promotion, and merit awards. Thus, whatever faculty do or say in such programs, they do or say behind closed doors. Their words and actions are to be kept from their chairpersons and their deans. By insisting on the isolation of these two processes, one maintains the integrity of the development program. This tenet of conventional wisdom was one of the starting assumptions of the Center for the Improvement of Teaching in designing and establishing its Ford Seminars on Teaching.

The Ford Seminars are the principal activity through which the CIT undertakes to improve teaching at the University of Massachusetts/Boston. The Seminars consist of a Seminar leader, selected from the faculty, and eight to twelve participants who apply to join the Seminar on the basis of a notice that describes its proposed subject and activities. The Seminar leader selects a

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topic related to teaching (for example, "Reading Texts," "Fostering Intellectual Growth," "Teaching Advanced Skills in Advanced Courses," or "The Educator and the Larger Communications Environment.") The topic serves to establish a perspective and a vocabulary through which the Seminar members can discuss and work on their own teaching. Two weeks of intensive reading, meeting and discussing in the summer are followed by a semester of classroom visitation, observation, critique, and experimentation. The Seminar leader brings the group together periodically for more general discussion and continues to consult with the participants about their teaching for the remainder of the academic year.

The belief that the Ford Seminars must be isolated from the personnel process was shared by virtually everyone involved in their development. It was the view of the directors and the first Seminar leaders. They agreed in planning for the first Seminars that faculty who participated would not receive letters for their personnel files from the Seminar leaders. This separation was also stressed by Chairpersons and Program Directors in collegiate discussions of teaching improvement programs. Nobody wanted to see the Ford Seminars become another source of information upon which to base personnel decisions.

The viewpoint expressed at UMB is consistent with the thinking of most professionals in the field of faculty evaluation. Peter Seldin, in *Changing Practices in Faculty Evaluation,* distinguishes two purposes of faculty evaluation:

> The cornerstone of every faculty evaluation program is its purpose: the purpose influences the kind of questions asked, sources of data, depth of data analysis, and dissemination of findings. In institutions of higher education today, the two leading purposes for faculty evaluation are to improve performance and to provide the rationale for administrative decisions on tenure, promotion in rank and retention. (127)

These two purposes imply two distinct types of evaluation identified by Michael Scriven as "formative" and "summative." Formative evaluation is undertaken for improvement and correction of teaching "in process." Summative evaluation is assessment of a level of achievement at the end of an activity. Seldin argues that the kinds of questions one asks, and answers one seeks, in these two kinds of evaluation can be quite distinct. Indeed, it is his view that they ought to be distinct:

> In an ideal world, faculty evaluations would be conducted separately for the purposes of improving teaching (formative) and

> making personnel decisions (summative), since one may have great impact on the other. But because of vital time and financial constraints, many institutions find that they cannot conduct the two evaluations separately. Instead, they conduct them simultaneously by integrating into a single questionnaire both the core items useful to administrators in personnel decisions and selected items useful to the faculty member to improve performance. (129)

Seldin sees dangers here. In particular, by using data appropriate to one purpose (teacher improvement) to accomplish another (personnel review), administrators may produce a false or incomplete picture of faculty accomplishments. By extension, should administrators persist in using these instruments inappropriately, they are likely to create an atmosphere that is not conducive to formative evaluation and teacher improvement at all.

Seldin and Scriven thus agree that the impulse to isolate programs aimed at improving classroom teaching from the evaluation of teaching for personnel purposes is grounded in both conceptual and programmatic arguments. The conceptual argument begins from the assumption that differing objectives require differing means to accomplish them. Since teacher improvement and personnel decisions are different objectives, they may not simply and uncritically share a common set of data. The means to achieve each must be tailored to each goal respectively. Thus, the kinds of observations one makes, questions one asks, evaluation one gives in order to improve teaching are not immediately transferable as observations, questions, and evaluation relevant to personnel actions. One must start with the goals to determine the relevant data and, from a conception of the data, develop tools of evaluation appropriate for collecting it. To appropriate uncritically the evaluation results from a teacher improvement program as a means to accomplish a personnel review will inevitably produce intellectually suspect conclusions. So, for example, in a teacher improvement program one stresses shortcomings and analyzes them with the intentions of overcoming them. A formative evaluation might probe an instructor's weaknesses and dwell on them in order to establish a benchmark against which to measure improvement. As a picture of a faculty member's overall teaching ability, however, such an evaluation would be seriously misleading. A proper summative evaluation ought to stress strengths as well as weaknesses in relation to whatever standards are appropriate to the evaluation in question. In a promotion decision the question to be answered is "Is this teaching excellent, or strong, or less than strong?" A summative evaluation should be designed to provide the evidence that would support the answer in any given case, not offer analyses or advice. In these examples, formative and summative evaluations stress very different features of teaching ability in ways that ill suit them for double duty.

Although researchers who study evaluation tend to stress the dangers of misusing data from formative evaluation in the personnel evaluation process, faculty are more influenced by other, more practical dangers. Programmatically, under most circumstances, faculty members are not likely to participate in a teacher improvement program that produces evaluations available to administrators or chairpersons for personnel purposes. The point is reasoned as follows: Faculty who sign up for teacher improvement programs by that act are admitting that their teaching is imperfect in some respect. If such programs are to be useful, they must be honest in the assessment of teaching defects and must, therefore, include at least some negative assessment and judgments. Negative assessments about one's teaching could increase the risk of negative personnel actions. Even if they are not directly damaging, they are not likely to support positive judgments. Even the risk of mildly negative personnel action is a sufficient reason for faculty to "play safe" and avoid teacher improvement programs. And, of course, those who most need such programs are those who are at greatest risk. Thus, unless you can assure participants that their participation will not be evaluated in personnel reviews, rational faculty will not voluntarily join development or improvement programs.

The practical dangers of participation are even somewhat greater than this argument suggests. If some faculty participants substantially better their teaching in a teaching improvement program, they may subsequently wish to use that information in the course of their own personnel evaluations. In doing so, however, they would set a precedent for others who may be less eager to have their progress assessed. If faculty routinely produce their formative evaluations for personnel reviews, those who decline to do so will be damning themselves by their refusal. This is a real risk, for personnel evaluators may assume that if you are not guilty, you have nothing to hide.

As a practical matter, then, to encourage participation by those who have the most to gain from a teacher improvement program, one must insure that they do not also have the most to lose — even if that means the program must take an uncompromising position on disclosure of the results for *all* participants.

In light of these arguments, the separation of the formative evaluation within the Ford Seminars from the summative evaluations in personnel reviews should be clear and compelling. Unfortunately, however, there are a variety of pressures pushing in the other direction. First, there is the desire of personnel committees and administrators to have as much information as exists when they make their decisions. "More data" is an ordinary academic demand but it is all powerful in the assessment of teaching. Undoubtedly, uncertainty about what constitutes good teaching and the disputes about how best to judge it contribute to the impulse to examine anything that might be relevant.

After all, no matter how positive a picture one establishes of a teacher, the possibility of unexamined negative information is disquieting in the context of disagreement about the standards of success. Judges prefer to make the least vulnerable judgments.

Second, participants themselves often wish to make the evaluation of their participation available to personnel review committees, after the fact. This can occur in a variety of situations. In major personnel actions, such as tenure decisions, faculty must meet a standard of strength or, preferably, excellence in teaching. Student evaluations and course materials are obvious sources of data, but peer judgment is a very powerful form of evidence — particularly to other peers. This form of evidence is not easily come by in most academic settings. Faculty do not typically observe one another's teaching, except in team-taught courses, at least in this institution. Thus, observations by a Seminar leader are valuable data, and if they are positive, a faculty member under review has a strong incentive to request their use. Similarly, merit increases are awarded, in part, for successful teaching. Documentation of these successes is, again, more compelling when it comes from a Seminar leader who has directly observed and analyzed a faculty member's classroom performance.

The pragmatic argument for isolating teacher improvement programs from the personnel process is, to some extent, undermined by the value of the potential evaluation to the participants. The policy of strict separation is attractive because it forecloses the maximum risk of participation — negative evaluation resulting in loss of money, promotion or employment. At the same time, however, the policy forecloses one of the maximum benefits of participation — positive evaluation resulting in increased salary, promotion or tenure. There are, to be sure, other benefits and satisfactions to be gained from a program unconnected to the personnel process; my point here is that the pragmatic argument for separation may not be as compelling as it seems on first consideration.

Despite the attractiveness of using the evaluations of the Ford Seminar leaders in participants' personnel reviews in selected cases, one must remain skeptical. If the Seminar leader's evaluations are formative, the conceptual question of their appropriateness to personnel review must still be addressed. If Seldin and like-minded theoreticians are correct, the peer evaluation may be less appropriate than we would like to believe. As we noted, the conceptual argument objects to the use of data collected for one purpose applied uncritically for another. If we, or the Seminar leaders, are not attuned to this distinction, our evaluations may be seriously distorted.

In order to deal with the pragmatic problems head-on, we need first to come to terms with the conceptual issues. Like Seldin and others, we have been treating teaching improvement and personnel action as two distinct *objectives* or *goals*. But there is a danger in labeling them as objectives or

goals, and that danger is that one might forget that a goal in one context can be a means in another which a faculty member might pursue relatively independently. But the improvement of teaching and its recognition through promotion or salary increases are often related in more complicated ways. In some cases, improved teaching is the goal; salary increase is the means by which it is recognized. In others, the salary increase or promotion is the goal; improved teaching is the route by which the goal is achieved. In other words, each of these goals can be subordinated to the other and employed in its service, depending on the outlook of the individual in question. As a result, summative evaluation might very well provide the evidence for a promotion that recognizes and encourages teaching improvement. Formative evaluation might very well help improve teaching in ways that lead to a desired promotion. For individual faculty members, the goals, the means of achieving them and the sources of evidence may be tightly intertwined.

The assumption on which Seldin and others base the separation of *teacher improvement* and *personnel action* (the assumption of distinct goals) is not precisely correct (at least for most of the people some of the time.) The reality varies with individuals and probably changes for individuals over the course of a career. The conceptual argument for separation of function does not take this into account, and so imposes a restriction that fails to acknowledge the real relations among the ends of evaluation that complicate the distinction between kinds of evaluation.

It is just not the case that personnel action must be concerned only with achievement and teacher improvement, only with progress. Sometimes in making a personnel judgment what is important is whether the faculty member made the effort to improve (as might be reflected in formative evaluation.) Sometimes in assessing teacher improvement, what is important is whether the faculty member became more effective (as reflected in summative evaluation.) The idea that these forms of evaluation are never interchangeable is as limited as the idea that the goals of evaluation are independent.

We are left, then, with the pragmatic argument. Whatever might be said against separation in theory (or in some individual cases) after the fact, if faculty *believe* that teacher improvement programs that have personnel consequences are to be avoided, such programs are not likely to do much for an institution. More precisely, if the faculty that the institution is most interested in having in the Seminar *believe* that teacher improvement programs could have negative consequences for them, then the policy of separation from personnel action is warranted.

As it happens, faculty who are interested in the Seminar are attracted to it for a variety of reasons. Some perceive specific problems with their teaching and hope to remedy them. Others sense a generalized need to "do something" about their teaching and seek advice and support. Still others are

looking for a forum to talk about teaching with colleagues and join a Seminar without a sense of problems to overcome. Some come with excellent teaching skills and a desire to share them with fellow participants. It would be possible, I think, to fill the Seminars with participants who would not be at risk in the disclosure of their performance. Possible, but far from desirable. The institutional cost of the Ford Seminars is justified to the extent that they improve the skills of those who need improving the most. The presence of more accomplished teachers is justified by the help they provide their colleagues and by their contribution to the general perception that Ford Seminars are not remedial. Since the mix is important, it is important to recruit across levels of teaching ability. Thus it is important to recruit those in greatest need and to establish policies that make such recruitment likely.

The response to the pragmatic argument, then, can not be that sufficient numbers of faculty would join the Seminars in hopes of (or in spite of) their role in personnel evaluation. To reach the faculty who would find the exposure of their Seminar performance chilling, it is necessary to keep the window to personnel evaluation officially closed.

Do Seminar participants, then, have no hope of bringing their efforts to bear on their own personnel evaluations? It seems to me that they are not utterly without recourse here. The need, in some cases, to support a personnel decision is genuine and legitimate. But the standards for appropriate use of evidence from Seminar participation must always be the integrity of shrouded participation by other faculty – past, present, and future.

I believe that there are three ways that faculty can draw evidence from their participation in Ford Seminars for personnel evaluation that do not jeopardize the policy of isolation or put other participants at risk. The first of these is the practice of the Center for the Improvement of Teaching and its Seminar leaders to *attest to the value of the fact of participation*. Participation in the Seminars demonstrates a commitment to improvement and involves an extended effort that may not be apparent to personnel committees. A general account of the terms of participation is relevant evaluation evidence for each participant.

Second, individual faculty members can demonstrate the value of their participation through *outcomes* of the experience. In some cases these may be course materials, assignments or examinations designed as a result of Seminar participation. In other cases, faculty members may be able to demonstrate improvement in student evaluations after taking the Seminar. Outcomes, in any event, are a proper subject of investigation by personnel committees for all faculty and thus not accessible primarily through Seminar participation. In short, demonstrated improvement by one faculty member as a result of participation in the Seminar does not expose other faculty members' participation to greater risks than they are otherwise subject.

Third and most important, faculty members may demonstrate the value of their participation in *self-evaluations*. Self-evaluation is not, of course, evidence for all aspects of teacher improvement. It can not, for example, demonstrate that students perceive a course as better organized or an instructor as more accessible. It can, however, demonstrate that a teacher has a firm grasp of some pedagogical principles or classroom dynamics. In short, articulate discussion of teaching is, itself, a manifestation of certain teaching skills. As such, it is evidence appropriate for an evaluation of the faculty member as a teacher.

The isolation of the Ford Seminars from the personnel process is official, but not complete. The successes of many faculty in improving their teaching are gratifying and deserving of recognition in personnel evaluations. Nevertheless, the impulse to keep the most direct evidence of these successes out of the hands of personnel committees is important if the Seminars are to reach those who will benefit most from them. By identifying the strongest arguments for a policy of isolation, and exploring their pragmatic foundations, we have suggested accommodations without sacrificing the intent of the policy.

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There are a variety of effective teaching styles and theories about the relationship between learner and subject and learner and teacher. Yet even a single course unit can incorporate a number of teaching styles and learning structures and thereby become more effective for a heterogeneous student body.

Course Rhythms, Learning Structures, Teaching Styles

Francis R. Hart

However philosophical or scientific in their own scholarly fields, college teachers are rarely philosophers or scientists of learning and teaching. When we seek help in understanding or improving ourselves as teachers, we usually want concrete, pragmatic advice, and resist theory. I do not blame us. Texts in the philosophy and the experience of teaching college students appear to offer few occasions where the conceptual and the anecdotal, the analytical and the impressionistic, meet to test and illuminate each other. Theory and method need each other; we need ground where they come together, but a middle ground is hard to discover. On the one hand, one finds the confessional and apologetic language of individual teachers, and the judgmental language of peer reviewers, speaking of "good teaching" as if they understood both the noun and the adjective. On the other, one finds the typological schemes of educational philosophers and social scientists, who offer models, modes, and styles, often useful fictions, but just as often governed by concealed judgmental assumptions, and usually difficult to apply to the realities of teaching. This essay is a venture in locating a middle ground.

I

It began as a search for descriptive language and moved by mysterious lines

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toward hesitant prescription. It started out with several taped records of class teaching at UMB by different teachers in a variety of disciplines and course types. Study of those tapes confirmed my fear that I had no adequate language to describe and interpret what I was hearing. So I turned somewhat at random to a few analysts of the "higher" learning and teaching. My purpose was not to judge or generalize about individual teachers, but simply to understand better what teaching is and what it can be. My samples of teaching were both limited and self-selecting (the participants volunteered for the experiment,) but the variety is sufficient to be useful. Merely listening to a class is of course severely restrictive. But much can be heard if only we know how to listen and how to describe what we hear. So my goals were initially these: (1) to develop an adequate terminology; (2) to acquire a prejudgmental sensitivity to what could be heard and described. Eventually, as will appear, the pursuit of these goals led to the forming of a synthetic model for designing a course of course unit.

My assumptions were – and they remain – pluralistic. Different types of teaching fit and further different types and stages of learning and intellectual development. (The issue of whether we must separate learning and intellectual development will appear before we are through.) Arguments over whether teaching is an art or a craft, a science, a discipline, are of little practical value. The only practical way to talk about teaching is to think about learning first and then to conceive of teaching as an ancillary activity, one among several possible causes of learning, a process of interaction (often planned) in which the chief goal is to further knowledge and understanding. Effectiveness in teaching begins with this goal and with a sense of decorum, of contextual plurality, of repertoire. A principled versatility is one sign – or is it a cause? – of effectiveness. The resourceful teacher possesses a working repertoire and knows how and when to use it according to which model of learning prevails in a given situation.

My hope here is to describe two aspects of the subject in such a way as to suggest meaningful and useful correlations: (1) the styles, modes, and models of teaching and learning; (2) the rhythms and structures of teaching and learning as they are manifest in curricular units and sequences. For the first we turn to Scheffler, Riesman, Bruner, Freire, Smith, Passmore, and Martin; for the second, Whitehead, Hirst, Freire, and Kasulis. (Citations are identified in the end notes.)

Scheffler's three "philosophical models of teaching" – actually models of learning – are a good place to begin. The "impression" model assumes that knowledge is "impressed" from without on the student's mind, and implies a learning process of acquisition, accumulation, generalization. The "insight" model assumes the pre-existence of knowledge in some form, and teaching is thus a process of educing or provoking, of precipitating the artic-

ulation of insight, of leading students to know their knowledge, to understand their insights. The "rule" model implies that learning is a process of increasing rationality toward a capacity of principled deliberation. Each, Scheffler argues, is flawed and incomplete alone, but corrected and synthesized they provide a sufficient and single complex model. Let us assume this is the case, and consider what we gain of practical value when we try to relate Scheffler's basic models to other conceptions of teaching "mode" and "style." A problem that arises is how to keep distinct kinds of mode and style from blurring, and indeed how to distinguish between style and mode in general. Nonetheless, we can see certain conceptual patterns and learn from their shared biases.

While Bruner speaks of an expository *mode* and a hypothetical *mode*, Riesman observes a didactic *style* and an evocative *style*, and Freire distinguishes a banking *model* from a dialogic *model*. All three are seeking to typify antithetical cognitive interactions between teacher and students, and the three dualisms have much in common. In the first term of each pair, it is assumed that the teacher is active, the student passive; the teacher imparts, the student receives; the teacher directs or controls, while the student performs under direction. In the second terms, it is assumed that teacher and student collaborate more as equals, as fellow inquirers. Each brings active participation, relevant experience, personal insight to the search for knowledge and understanding. The teacher guides and provokes the student to clearer and fuller insight and to autonomous discovery. Clearly, the first terms are grounded in Scheffler's "impression" model; the second in his "insight" model. And Scheffler's critique would help us to see the falseness of the dichotomy, if such were our purpose here. We will consider it later in a practical context.

But first, a more immediate problem. What happens, in these analogous dualisms, to Scheffler's third or "rule" model, the idea of teaching and learning as the cultivation of rational principles and methods of inquiry and deliberation? Is it left somewhere outside or somewhere in between? We need to know, if only because at present the most prestigious school of pedagogy locates our chief obligation here. We must teach students "how to think," how to "conceptualize." "Our teaching," says Scheffler, "needs thus to introduce students to these principles [principles "definitive of rationality," "principled assessment of reasons," powers of "principled deliberation"] we ourselves acknowledge as fundamental, general, and impartial, in the various departments of thought and action." (133) But this is a goal, not a model. Does it assume the impression or the insight model? Is increased rationality, are the powers of principled deliberation, more to be impressed or more a matter of insight to be discovered? Can the rules of inquiry and deliberation be taught – as Scheffler's own language suggests (we "introduce students" to "principles," we "teach rationality" to "interiorize these principles") – in a style or mode

of expository didacticism? The Platonist may believe that rationality can be educed, while the Aristotelian seeks to impress it.

The problem is difficult, and its resolution is crucial. We find it, for example, in Frank Smith's psycholinguistic account of comprehension and learning. Smith postulates that all learning must begin with and from the "theory of the world" already in the student's head. That "theory" is a model of reality that is ruled, ordered into categories, category discriminations, and category interconnections. It is and must remain "implicit," yet it is "there," and presumably it operates as the ground of what Scheffler calls insight. But wait. This theory in the head *includes* what Smith call "discourse structures" and "genre schemes" – the conventional patterns of intention and expectation that allow us to understand what we read. How do these conventions or traditions get into the head? Presumably the structures of analytic inquiry and argument, of story and explanation, are not innate, but must be learned or acquired. Presumably they are components of what Scheffler calls rationality. Can they be evoked or hypothesized, or must they initially be impressed, that is, expounded or demonstrated by the teacher?

I am reminded of an unnerving discovery I remake in almost every course at every level. I ask the student to give "reasons" for his judgment or inference, and when the student gives something else, I ask, "Is that the reason?", only to discover that most students profess they do not know (or do not know they know) what a reason is. What then am I to do but expound didactically, demonstrate and explain, what a reason is? And when, then, I ask, "Do you see?" do I not mean "Do you get it? Has it become a part of your 'theory in the mind'? Has my impression become a part of your insight?"

Is this not the same as Freire's cursed "banking" model, in which the teacher "deposits" knowledge and understanding in the student's mind? And if so, can Freire himself really avoid it? For him, teaching and learning begin with the forming of a "thematic universe," a composed agenda of student problems and preceptions. It proceeds with the decoding of that thematic universe into a structure of dialectical contradictions, moving as it does so from abstract to concrete, from whole to part and back to whole. But what if the student cannot yet "recognize" what is abstract and what is concrete, what is part and what is whole? Can such "recognition" be evoked or hypothesized, or must it initially be "impressed"? Surely Freire is right that "I cannot think *for others* or *without others,* nor can others think *for me*. Even if the people's thinking is superstitious or naive, it is only as they rethink their assumptions in action that they can change" (100). But how shall they learn that "rethinking" process? Jane Martin seems to say the same thing, but notice her qualifiers, and her implied temporal order:

> Seeing is something each person has to do for himself. No one can do your seeing for you. Others can point out things to you, give you relevant information, *enlarge your conceptual repertoire, and all the rest* [my emphasis], but in the last analysis [does she mean the "final stage?"] you have to come through and do the actual job – the seeing – yourself. (164)

It seems, in fact, that at different times or stages, in rhythmic alteration, both the expository and the hypothetical, the didactic and the evocative, are needed. It seems that impression and insight must operate dialectically so as to generate and regenerate each other, and that the learning of rules of rational inquiry and deliberation belongs to both: they must be impressed, expounded; they must then be "seen," discovered.

II

With this preliminary glimpse into the correlations of style, mode, and model, we can turn to some of the samples of university teaching taped for my benefit. (I use fictitious names. The real ones do not matter here.)

To listen to Thomas one would suppose that he is merely drawing out the insights students bring to the question of what is most "strange" in the world of Chaucer's General Prologue, and what they think "pilgrimage" means. In the "evocative" mode he asks for a formulation of that thematic world in its mixtures of the material and the spiritual, largely in terms of student insights. He provides no information; some students volunteer it unasked, saying what they "know" about the Middle Ages whereupon he insists mildly on a distinction between textual and contextual. He seeks definitions and redefinitions, but only those the students can provide; he calls for examples not as evidentiary proof but merely by way of specification and illustration. He avoids assessments – of Chaucer's world, of the students' perception – but welcomes all insights, asks that they be explained, interprets them by conflation and synthesis, and returns them for further dialogue.

In fact, the class has been systematically primed the day before with an agenda of study questions, and these questions were simply an interrogative reframing of a "lecture" Thomas chose not to give. They articulate his own theme – that the "worldly" and the "religious" are unusually coexistent and close in Chaucer's world. The precise nature of, and the issue of valid perspectives on, that closeness are left for a later stage of critical deliberation. First, the thematics must be formed through teacher-student interaction and in terms they agree upon. Thus, Thomas's preparation is a concealed exposition, while his classroom style is "hypothetical"; that is, students control the

order and emphases of the agenda. And thus his plan is implicitly didactic while his intention is evocative.

In a psychology course Rosen, too, is "evocative," evoking a "way of looking at the world" that was Freudianism, as Thomas was doing with Chaucer's world. But Rosen calls on other mental powers. His key commands, repeated with a warm enthusiasm that belies their imperative nature, are, "Imagine! Imagine! the powerful impact, the tremendous impact! You see? you see?" Little information is given (it is in the assigned text). Rather, stress is kept on realizing – feeling, imagining – this remote mental world. No complexities are explained, no critical assessments made of Freudianism or its critics. The point is to understand this world not so much conceptually as imaginatively. The style is dramatic; here the teacher is an intermediary, medium, magician, for whom key words carry power and insight. Many questions are asked, but they are questions directed exclusively at drawing out implications of those words, and not (as with Thomas) at drawing out the insights of individual students. The questions are repeated, redirected, developed forcefully; he seems eager to project his own sense of meaning into the students' mind. "When you see a word like this, you ask yourself what other word could have been used, and wasn't used, and why." YOU YOU YOU. Yet it is evident that what he wants them to "see" and say is what HE is getting at; what he is getting at is (he implies) simple and should be obvious, and he avoids expounding it. When an unrelated response is offered, he says there is a point to it (not pausing to explain that point), but "it is not what I'm driving at." When they guess what he is driving at, he shares with them an infectious delight in recognition. This style or mode is thus at once powerfully evocative AND strongly didactic, but neither expository nor hypothetical to any great degree.

If Rosen seeks to project his own mental insight into the students, Schmidt seems to display extraordinary insight into students' minds. Thomas reached for such insight through a probing of their words; Schmidt scarcely needs more than a hint. He is conducting a class session in final synthesizing review – "making a diagram of the course" – trying,he says, "to do this *with you*." Where Rosen often asked, "You see? You see?" and Thomas asked, "What is your impression? How does it relate?" Schmidt says, "You know! You know!" and urges them to know their knowledge in the context of the diagram he constructs. The enterprise is communal; he often breaks in with, "Others, help!" He collects names and summary phrases which they recall and supply, and when frequently they draw a blank, he urges gently, "Come on. You can think of something. That's it!" Almost anything may be a beginning, the start of a thread of retrieval and continuity. Follow-up questions take many analytical forms: what? who? how so? what do you mean by that? excuse for what? can you draw that out a little more?

Names and words have as much power here as for Thomas and Rosen, but for Schmidt they must come AFTER knowledge and understanding, for they "encapsulate what we've been talking about." A new word comes up, and Schmidt says, "I would make you work out what it meant if we hadn't worked out what it meant before we came to the word." (Note the authority of "would make you" together with the cooperative "we" of working out.) Schmidt seems often to anticipate what they will say, even guess what they are thinking: "Are you thinking that, etc.? Yes? Tell us about it." On some occasions the name given is not what he is "looking for," but he welcomes it and pauses to explore the choice. But always it is clear that he knows, and that they know he knows, what he is after. Occasionally, as names and phrases connect, he announces he must pause to explain the connection, and does so. With these exceptions, the mode seems much more "hypothetical" than "expository," and yet the aim is a comprehensive expository diagram. It is less evocative than Rosen's and equally didactic. The "banking" has been done earlier in the course, and now the deposit is to be paid back with interest and with insight.

By contrast, Stone and Reilly come close to the traditional "lecture" format, yet the designation is superficial, and they differ as much from each other as from Rosen and Schmidt. For one thing, Stone's lecture is amply informative: he is provided with much information and he imparts it. Reilly's is predominantly interpretive: he is expounding ideas as outlooks, as attitudes, and distinguishing some that are easily confused. For another, Stone's mode is argument: he offers information in support of a position, and while students are not invited to debate it openly, some obviously feel incited to do so. Reilly's mode is reflective, nonjudgmental; the meaning of a position, not its validity, is at stake. Stone is more personal in stance while less personal in style. His style is public: he is the public informer, the knowledgeable elder who says, "My advice to you is. . . ." Reilly's style, quite impersonal, is private: quiet, meditative, measured, searching, it imparts the almost hypnotic quality of an interior monologue. Yet it is a monologue into which students evidently feel ready and willing to join, almost as if an unusual attentiveness had included them in the mental process. Appropriately, Stone's design is enumerative-expository, while Reilly's is a connected reflection, tracing and explicating the steps of his reasoning. Thus, one "lecture" is a public report-demonstration, while the other "lecture" is an intimate conversation (yet not informal in the sense that Schmidt, Thomas, or Rosen is informal.)

Both "lectures" are strongly didactic: substance, method, and form are dictated by the teacher. Does this mean they are not evocative as well? Abundant new information is certainly evocative for some, and ideological discrimination is so for others. The question is, what is being evoked? For David Riesman, whose term we are using here, the evocative refers only to student

insight and experience, and in these "lectures" the impression model certainly prevails. Neither is hypothetical in the sense that it leads students to participate in the shaping and direction of discourse. And yet, their styles and modes are very different. So much for simple classifications.

Russo's manner is as much that of the "public lecture" as Stone's, yet its structure is dialogic. He frequently calls for student input, and like Thomas, he has primed the class for it. They have been given an assignment. They are expected to come with knowledge of the text and notes of analytic assessment. His questioning is as analytic and sequential as Schmidt's, though the questions are critical in a scientific mode: what were the advantages and disadvantages? what were the indications? what do the examples suggest? what conclusions were drawn, and how? Indeed, the dialogue takes the formal shape of critical process, and so it is at once impersonal and dialogic, structured and yet lively.

Is this "lecture" or "discussion"? The distinction is meaningless. Is it didactic or evocative? It is and it must be both. The teacher is demonstrating a critical method; he is also evoking an awareness of how a theory evolved, was tested, was found flawed. Is it hypothetical or expository? It is exposition of hypotheses, exposition that proceeds hypothetically. Is it governed by an impression model or an insight model? Both and neither; rather, here more than in our other samples, the rule model prevails.

In fact, with the close of this survey of our teaching samples, the terms "model," "mode," and "style" are misleading. They refer not to choices or options, but rather to polarities of intention, assumption, and interaction that play against each other at times and complement each other at times. Without insight, what can impression be worth? Without impression, how can insight clarify and grow? Without rules of rational deliberation, how can either develop into systematic understanding? The issue is utilitarian: how well does any single combination of styles or modes serve the ends of learning — to know more, to know with livelier insight or awareness, to know more rationally?

III

We can understand and assess variations in style and mode only when we locate them in different contexts, at different stages in the process of learning. For us, in practical terms, this means at different stages in a curricular structure and in the structures of individual courses and course units. Different meanings of "structure" appear in our theoretical texts, but perhaps the initial distinction we most need is the one Hirst provides.

Hirst reminds us that the order or structure of a subject — its methodological logic, its concept-system (Passmore) — is not the same as the structure or order of learning the subject. (This is simple to state, difficult to

implement.) Thus, how to teach history is not a historical question; the former is partly a matter of temporal order, the latter of logical order, as in geometry the sequence of steps toward problem-solution is not the same as the sequence of steps in logical proof. The composition teacher knows well how hard and how important it is for the student writer to learn that the composing process is quite different from the composed product. The order in which a student learns is not the order in which what is learned is structured in his mind. And yet, says Hirst, the order of teaching must be based on an understanding of the logical order of the subject, and must recognize an "order of priority" in its concepts and how they are interrelated. We cannot deal here with the main problem Hirst raises. For now, with this distinction in mind, we turn once more to our theorists' texts and to critical synthesis in search of a plausible useful model.

I begin with Whitehead's idea of a "rhythm." Whitehead suggests that we think of learning as a rhythm of three stages, a threefold cycle, a rhythm in which there are numerous eddies. The rhythm begins and ends with freedom; discipline dominates the middle. The first stage, "romance," is a predisciplinary awakening to the novelty and possibilities of a subject, the arousing of curiosity. The second stage, "precision," focuses on intrinsic facts, methods, concepts, competences. The third, "generalization," expands into broader syntheses, applications, extrinsic connections. In summary paraphrase: Stage One: hypothetical exploration; Stage Two: definition, validation; Stage Three: implication, extrapolation. Whitehead, of course, is conceiving of a rhythm that extends over several years of adolescence. But we may ask whether, in its "eddies," it might also apply to shorter durations and units: to a college career? to a curricular sequence? to a single course? to a course unit? I think it does.

If I am right, the implications for the shape of a single semester's course of study are several. The first segment (or month) is predisciplinary, exploratory; its materials, assignments, and teaching styles are selected as most immediately provocative, suggestive of problems and possibilities in the subject. The teacher serves chiefly as provocateur, evocator. Students are expected and encouraged to venture, to hypothesize, to "see the possibilities." The second segment or month, the middle section, is the time for "precision," for the work most difficult, most demanding of discipline, methodical study. Materials, assignments, styles are chosen accordingly, and in student performance, a premium is placed on acquisition, technique, method. In the final month, broader connections and applications are emphasized; students are guided toward rational synthesis; materials, assignments and styles are chosen to this end. Course materials do not break down so neatly, of course, and teaching styles overlap, but shifts of emphasis are possible and appropriate. Indeed, the same rhythm is applicable as well to the single course unit (a

month.) Its implications, as well as its validity, may become clearer as we try to integrate it with other structural models.

Scheffler's three models have no explicit concern with process structures, but such structures are implied. If we place Scheffler's models in sequential order, they complement and further elucidate Whitehead's rhythm. Scheffler's impression model suggests a process of acquiring new information, new concepts and methods, and this reminds us of the rigors of Whitehead's "precision." His insight model suggests a process of educing, of the raising of consciousness, of coming to know what one knows already, and this I would associate with Whitehead's "romance" (and Freire's "generative thematics.") The rule model also suggests "precision," but its emphases and goals suggest the "generalization" stage even more, for here the student focuses more on principles that are "fundamental, general and impartial, in the various departments of thought and action," and proceeds (we hope) toward "principled deliberation" and "the building of autonomous and rational character." Such are Scheffler's models, and such is his order of presentation. But if we adapt them to Whitehead's rhythm, we might place insight first, impression second, and principled deliberation last. Allowing for overlap, we might suppose that at different stages of a course or a course unit, different models ought to prevail.

For some of the pedagogical implications of this view, we can turn to Kasulis on "Questioning." He offers us a triad of a different kind. There is "Content" questioning, whose meaning is fairly obvious from the term. There is also "Process" questioning, whose aim, as he describes it, is merely to motivate and manage the class dynamic. And there is "Person" questioning, which seeks to engage the student personally in the discussion process. Were there time here, we might challenge the separation, challenge the implication that "process" and "person" are mere tactical supports to "content." But the point here is simply this: should these different kinds of questioning be emphasized at different stages in a course unit? can these shifts of emphasis in dialogue correspond to the stages in our rhythm? Trying to answer, we may learn more about the process of learning in a course.

One way to think of the process of learning in a course unit is as an alternation or rhythm of community and autonomy (dialectically related.) Simply put, the student enters alone, joins a collaborative community of learners, and emerges with a fuller, truer autonomy (the community remembered, internalized.) At times the focus is more on group dialogue, cooperation, consensus building. (I would stress this at the start of any unit, to build or renew a sense of community and trust, to generate a shared thematics, a sharing of insights – hence, Whitehead's "romance.") At other times the student is closely focused (openly or inwardly) on interchange with the teacher, is being "impressed," is "receiving." At such times, the didactic style and the exposi-

tory mode dominate, for this stage is Whitehead's "precision." At other times, the student is necessarily "tuned out," having been stimulated or incited to think privately about, to work privately on, material or issue. (At such times, it may even be best for the student to stay away from classes, to work "on his own" for a few days, and this possibility should be part of the teacher's plan.) What complicates classroom interaction is that it may include all three at once, and, while this fact cannot be planned, it may be planned for. Some classes will be lively communal exchanges, some will be sustained discourse from the teacher, some will be quieter, more thoughtful workshop sessions.

But when are these different kinds of interaction most likely to occur? My hunch – perhaps it is my hope – is that the further into a course unit one goes, the more autonomous the student becomes, the more he is aware of, the more he knows, has to think about, is absorbed in his own priorities and projects. And this situation has grown out of the other two kinds of interaction: the exploratory exchanges with the group, the more disciplined exchanges with the didactic teacher.

I can explain this better by jumping to Bruner's essay on discovery in *On Knowing*. Bruner is speaking here on behalf of teaching modes that encourage "discovery," and he argues (assumes, rather) that discovery is facilitated by the "hypothetical," by involving the student actively in directing the processes of inquiry. While such a view is easy to endorse, we ought not speak of "discovery" as a single enterprise, but specify what kind of discovery, what object of discovery, we have in mind. Applying our "rhythm" model, we hope in the first stage for the discovery of problems and possibilities, issues, generated largely from what the student already knows, suspects, or has experienced. In the second, we provide for the discovery of more, and more precise, knowledge, new information, new ideas and conceptual instruments, internal patterns and relationships. In the third, external connections, implications and applications, general contexts are to be discovered. Different processes are involved in discovering an issue or possibility, an elusive fact or relevant idea, discovering a generic, thematic, or disciplinary relationship.

In the use of "internal" and "external," I am adopting a distinction made by Martin in her discussion of understanding as "seeing connections." The distinction can be adapted to our Whitehead "rhythm." To teach understanding of a subject, we guide students to see its connections, some external, some internal. But there are two principal kinds of "external" connection that concern us. The initial external connection brings together new problems and possibilities that confront the student in a course unit with what he brings with him – his previous experience, his insight, what Smith calls "the theory of the world" already "in his head." The final external connection brings together what he learns in and from the course with more general and systematic structures – of discipline, of application – to which that learning may

belong. In the middle, then, comes an emphasis on the discrete subject matter itself in its internal connections – specific texts, techniques, and information. In short, to apply our rhythmic model, the initial "romance" stage is generated (as in Freire's generative thematics) out of the first external confrontation of the student's sense of the world with new areas of potential learning. The second or "precision" stage addresses the effects of that confrontation through a disciplined inquiry into the internals of new information and concepts. The third or "generalization" stage moves once more to external connections, organizing new understandings into a revised insight, a revised "theory of the world," a broader sense of intellectual or disciplinary context – Freire's systematic study of the findings. (1) What do we need and what might we find? (2) What can we get and how do we get it? (3) What can we do with it when we have it?

The dynamic of the rhythm is revealed more in its internal connections when we turn briefly to Passmore and his defense of the imparting of information as a necessary and legitimate teaching mode – not to the exclusion of other modes (moral, practical, conceptual), but as essential to all of them. This is not the place to examine Passmore's debates with Dewey, Bruner, and the moralists. Rather, we can accept his insistence on information-imparting, so long as we also stress his restriction: information is effectively imparted only as it is needed and perceived to be needed, and only as it is organized according to that need and according to general concepts, methods, and applications. When we accept this, we discover another version of our rhythm.

We find a more significant practical consequence when we return to Bruner. Bruner's distinction of teaching "modes," like Riesman's duality of "styles," at least suggests to us that there can be basically different cognitive relationships between teacher and student, and between both and a subject matter. The differences can be adapted to our eclectic model of a course rhythm. In the first stage, the teacher serves chiefly as provoker and generator of insight, evocator; in the second, his role is more didactic and expository, for he is the disciplinarian; in the third, he is the guide and resource in the process of synthesis and generalization.

If this account of the structure of a course unit, and of the appropriate adaptation to that structure of diverse teaching styles and modes, is sound, then our understanding of teaching has itself moved through a structured learning process. And why shouldn't it? Teaching is a complex discipline, and as such it is to be learned. And perhaps the idea of teaching styles can be seen anew. For many of us – certainly for me – the learning began in a simple absolutism, one that still haunts the public awareness of education. There is good teaching and bad. There are Good Teachers and Bad. The discovery that it is not that simple leads, as in other areas of learning, to the state of mind called by the intellectual developmentalists Multiplicity. Here, it seems

that there are as many styles of teaching as there are persons doing them, and who can say that one is privileged, better? Indeed, who could do anything about the Multiplicity anyway? Each of us teaches in his "own way." From such a helpless and deterministic pluralism, we may now have moved to a more useful and rational position. Perry calls it Contextual Relativism, and Clinchy and Zimmerman (for good reasons) prefer simply Contextualism. Within a rationally understood context, we can carry on a principled deliberation of teaching, as of any other behavioral discipline.

IV

Having tried to see the internal connections of our subject, we discover as if by chance the broader context. Current discussions of higher education focus on models of learning and teaching. What happens to our model of teaching styles in curricular rhythms when placed in such a larger context? Here is a brief and tentative answer.

Perry and his later commentators give us yet another triadic progression. The first stage in the intellectual development of the college students they have studied is a simple dualist attitude toward truth and authority. This stage has not been observed empirically, but has been extrapolated from the latter stages. And so, our chief practical concern as college teachers may be confined to the two succeeding stages of Multiplicity and Contextualism.

Can Perry's study of young Harvard males, and Clinchy and Zimmerman's corrective study of young Wellesley females, apply to the different and older students we teach at an urban commuter campus of a state university? The answer is of course doubtful. Moreover, the developmentalist is concerned with an overall pattern of personal development in the individual student, while our concern here has been with the unit of learning and teaching, and with the process of learning a subject. The refinement of developmental models is certainly of interest and importance to advisers and curriculum planners. Of what relevance, however, can such models be in the teaching of a single course?

Certainly a considerable number of our younger students come expecting from their teachers a kind and a degree of unequivocal authority that seems to us counterproductive. Some of our older students have a similar expectation of order and discipline — not because they are at this "stage," but because life experiences, copings of various kinds, have made or kept them authoritarians. Such students enter a new course or subject with the dualistic attitude of right and wrong answers; for them, a beginning in "romance" — in "chaos," untested feasibility, puzzlement, or undisciplined insight — must prove seriously unsettling or frustrating. For them, the promise of a precision to come will be reassuring, and they will be intolerant mean-

while of discussion that interrupts the teacher. To provide the precision first would be premature.

If we accept the developmental model as normative, then certain general pedagogical questions arise. To what extent *can* we guide, direct, or expedite the development? To what extent *should* we? What are the best ways of doing so? And if we see (as I do) the Whitehead "rhythm" as consonant with that model, then, first, how can we nudge or provoke the dualistic student to discover multiplicity, to realize that uncertainty, possibility, diversity of insight are legitimate – more than that, creative, generative, fun? For this is what we must do if our curricular rhythm is to begin in "romance." We need ways of reassuring such students that confusion, uncertainty, multiplicity are OKAY – even necessary at the start.

Clinchy and Zimmerman imply that to do this, we must show such students that their opinions matter – even when they are merely "opinions" or what Clinchy and Zimmerman call "ready made reaction." According to Freire, we must begin with such opinions (even "superstitions") in order to make up a generative thematics, and then proceed to decode what we find. What do such opinions really mean? Why do people hold them? How do they differ from or resemble the opinions of others? These are the questions we raise. A good example can be recalled from teaching an introductory interdisciplinary course in Law and Justice a few years ago. We began with a documentary film on everyday police behavior. It provoked a lively and prejudicial "argument" in which some students assured us from experience that all policemen spent most of their time beating up teenage pot-smokers, and others angrily defended policemen as blue knights protecting neighborhoods against psychotic hoodlums. We would shortly introduce our students to several disciplined studies of real police behavior, but not yet. First, we needed that undisciplined exchange of impressions and myths, and we needed to help students become actively aware of them, to attend to them, to decode them, to generate out of them an agenda of problems.

As a result of such an initial procedure, many lower division students evaluate their teachers and classes primarily in terms of teachers' tolerance, teachers' openness, teachers' respect for students as persons with opinions, teachers' willingness to allow anyone to state his or her "ideas." This is our version of "romance." This stage brings with it the unnerving discovery well described by Clinchy and Zimmermen. Students feel open, free, but many of them begin also to feel oppressed by the sense of not knowing what to do with the freedom, how to get beyond mere multiplicity, how to choose among alternative opinions, how to make decisions. This is the problem Clinchy and Zimmerman call "cognitive incompetence" – feeling free to think but not knowing how. Robert Frost long ago observed that college teachers are forever ordering students to "think" but seldom showing them how. At any rate,

the pedagogical response to this unnerving discovery – but not before most students make it – is to lead the way from "romance" to "precision."

And at this second stage, according to the scheme I have been sketching, the teacher necessarily plays a different role, a more didactic and expository role: he shows students how to think, to acquire knowledge, to examine, test, organize it. Now, if Clinchy and Zimmerman are correct, some students will resist this shift. They will see the teacher as having lost his tolerance, as imposing his own "style," and nothing more. The more pragmatic or cynical ones will try to imitate the teacher's intellectual style simply because he is "in charge" and will judge students according to "what he wants." The more sensitive ones will experience the feeling Clinchy and Zimmerman also describe well. Having gained voices of their own, they will feel that they are now losing them, being robbed of them, beginning to speak in teachers' voices or in voices that simply react to teachers. Clinchy and Zimmerman associate this set of responses with sophomore slump and find students moving beyond it as they enter upper division work. In my own experience at UMB, I am less sanguine about the pace. I find bright juniors and seniors (indeed, elsewhere I have found Ph.D candidates) struggling still to find their "own voices." Some are still anxious about freedom or multiplicity, and willing to move on only when they have realized a truer discipline, wanting to jump straight from the earlier stage of certainty to the later one.

Perhaps the wish is inevitable, for every new course they take seems to reenact the process, to force them once more into a confusing multiplicity, to show them even more powerfully how little they know. This is one reason why I think the individual course rhythm so important. Each course needs its own sense of closure, of synthesis and assimilation, so that the student finishes each course with a sense of having achieved an organized knowledge, a sense of personal achievement and control, however partial, temporary, or illusory. And to accomplish this for them, with them, we must somehow move from their stage of multiplicity to the final stage (temporarily speaking) of principled deliberation, of what the developmentalists call "contextual reasoning" and Whitehead calls generalization. We must do this, however imperfectly, within the confines of a particular course or course unit.

Directing or precipitating this move may be the most difficult operation for the college teacher. Doing it depends on how the middle stage of "precision" is maneuvered. Assuming my view that at this stage the teacher necessarily provides an authoritative model – imparts information, demonstrates disciplined modes of inquiry, analysis, assessment – the question is how.

My conviction is that in doing it, we cannot avoid having some students think that "this is merely the teacher's style." Nor does it do any good to insist that "this is the right or the only right way." This is our hard choice. Either we say (or imply), "Here is how to do it," or we say, "Here is how I do it.

Trust me. Learn the way I do it, *understand* that way, see why I do it that way. Later on you may well find a better way, find your own way" – even though we suspect (we cannot say it) that "your own way will eventually resemble mine in its essential orders and methods." This is why I believe that at this, the "precision" stage, the teacher must invite the student into his or her own mind or mental process, and why, in our teaching samples, I admire most those "middle" class sessions where such an invitation is given. "Here is how I learned this. Here is how I read this text, this poem or page or chapter. Here is how I went about my search or my analysis. Here is how I organized my paper, ordered my position, reasoned, used reasoning to construct or evaluate my opinion."

This is the way, I believe, to manage the "precision" stage, and to facilitate the move from the precision dominated by the teacher's mental process to the stage of principled deliberation carried on more by the student, the stage of more rational autonomy. But the building of contextual reasoning must grow out of the building of intellectual context. And since the momentum of a course rhythm is precisely that, building an intellectual context, contextual reasoning comes into central focus only in the final stage of a course or course unit. It declares its presence in the course of "generalization," of application. It is recognized and confronted in the painful mental process Clinchy and Zimmerman found so difficult for their seniors, the process of decision-making, the problem of intellectual commitment. Once the context has been created, once the issues have been generated and the knowledge acquired, then it should begin to seem possible to deliberate rationally, in that context, and to direct such deliberation toward principled decisions and intellectual commitments. This is why my climactic assignments in any course or course unit, whatever the subject, tend to focus on the process of making reasoned decisions. And at this stage, as must be obvious, the role of the teacher – the style or mode of the teacher – is a subtle and difficult one. Relatively speaking, it may seem easy to play the provocateur, and then to play the didact. But to withdraw at the finale of the rhythm into the role of self-effacing mentor demands extraordinary tact and self-restraint.

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Talented students may need a lack of confidence as a defense mechanism, and as their teachers, we should avoid acting the therapist and instead devise routine, even mundane assignments.

Successful Learning Without Confidence: Unexpected Psychoanalytical Contributions to Pedagogy

Neal H. Bruss

Several years ago, if not more recently, the general opinion was that at faculty colloquia like this, people mainly wanted to swap recipes – assignments. Recipe-swapping was not considered sufficiently theoretic, and was therefore discouraged. Nonetheless I intend to offer you some recipes and basic ingredients as I address the single most vexing aspect of my own teaching, the promising students who do not realize their promise, regardless of what I do. I take all of the following to be variations on one type; you might consider whether any of them are familiar and whether they fall into patterns which I have not mentioned:

- At worst, the promising students do not complete the course (and I stress that these students do not seem to have serious health or work problems.) If they receive Incompletes, they do not complete the work within a year.

- Some essays these students write are logically so far from what was assigned that it is impossible to create a bridge between what the student wrote and what the assignment requires.

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- Certain essays that are turned in are brittle and incoherent, or exhibit childish problems in spelling or punctuation.

- In class, their answers are not appropriate to the question, off the point.

- In conferences, or in the hall after class, these students may confess the source of their difficulty in doing their work, or may withhold mentioning the source energetically. They may also put pressure on us to take some other role, of friend, paramour, confidante, member of the family, even child with some of our older students – anything but teacher.

- Often in conferences – conferences on the day a paper should have been submitted – I find myself giving encouragement or working through an assignment with such a student. Usually the student leaves the office buoyed up – and here is the crucial thing: between the conference and the next class the work somehow does not get done – the effort served no useful purpose.

When everything fails, the teacher gets tough – gives F's, changes course procedures in the sixth week, and espouses a pedagogic libertarianism to colleagues about the student's being free to fail. This, to my mind, expresses nothing more than the teacher's total frustration.

Lest I sound as though I am beating on my students, let me stress that the single most important thing to me in this experience is that my time and effort produce no result. Whether or not the student is not meeting his potential, why am I not meeting mine, and at such cost?

The Psychoanalytic "Basic Assumption"

If you were reading this in an educational journal, you would have expected a boldfaced subhead, "Teacher As Therapist," and you would be right – with a vengeance, perhaps a Fury's vengeance. The pedagogical approach that I have been describing, I feel, has largely been informed by residual therapeutic concepts, some from my own schooling, some from our general culture or from chatting with colleagues in the departmental mailroom. It is only by following through the history of some of these concepts in the course of my reading in psychoanalytic semiotics this year and seeing how some of them have evolved that I can see a way out.

It may surprise you that I intend to give you four or five reasons from the pen of Freud's successors why you should *not* elicit the cause of the difficulty nor interpret the difficulty for the student. We have come to these students with a type of therapeutic thinking; maybe some further therapeutic

thinking can help us understand what we can and cannot do for them.

First, the single basic assumption on which psychoanalysis rests: that mental life is intentional and continuous – that thoughts and expressive behavior serve purposes and are in mutual contact. The motive, intent, or purpose and contact need not be conscious, and often are not. Repression of the motive from consciousness is *also* a defense against the conflict, *also* serves a purpose (and is part of the psychical continuity.) Therapy begins with the recognition of thoughts and actions that *seem* not to serve a purpose or to fit the rest of the patient's behavior. For there to be gaps in someone's self-knowledge, or thoughts that make no sense, is symptomatic, the result of a defense of some sort. This is an extremely important point to remember about classic therapeutic thinking: intention and continuity comprise its base – not infantile sexuality, or repression, or instinct, or even the Unconscious.(1)

To return to our students with "promise": it is difficult to classify them demographically. Many of them are returning to school after years away, but not all of them. And not all returning students by any means fall into this category of not meeting their promise.

One thing that does strike me consistently about promising students who do not come through, and they can be hockey players from Neponset or returning women from the suburbs, is how often they say that their basic problem is that they "lack confidence." When I last taught intermediate composition, during the second week, one student said "I don't have confidence," and the class echoed it like a Greek chorus or a revival meeting.

Now what happens if we test that statement, "I lack confidence" against the "basic psychoanalytical assumption"?

First, we can rewrite it as intention: "I lack confidence for a purpose," or "I disavow confidence" – "I *need* to lack confidence." Second, we now have the problem of understanding *what* intention would be served by warding off confidence, and why our office hours make no difference. The answer must be in the rest of the psychical continuity, in some other part of the student's psychical life. In other words, lacking confidence may not get the student very far with us, but we are not the whole picture – there is more to the student's psychical continuity.

This brings us back to the teacher's role. To be an interpreter, espionage agent, busybody, prober, counselor, questioner-into-the-personal-life, I will begin to argue, is not theoretically justified. But occasionally, over the years, *without* prying, we do get factual information from students, and this is what we find:

- We say with pride that many of our students are the first in their families to go to college, but we occasionally discover that not all families approve. Many families, parents and friends are jealous, frightened or angry – and

not without reason. The student who does well with us changes. Those at home may be left behind, or just left. Is there one office in the history of our university other than the Women's Center that explicitly addresses the problem of going home after class? To lack confidence may serve this *intention* – a compromise: I go to school, but I do not accomplish enough to warrant a split with my family.

- The spouses: we have seen enough female students with black eyes to know that for a woman to go to school, putting stress on housekeeping and demands on the spouse, calling into question the spouse's lack of equivalent ambition, may lead to a scene of violence. Preventing a separation, even when physical violence is not a possibility, may be part of the motive: the preservation of the nuclear family, often with young children, can be a reason for disavowing intelligence and lacking confidence.

- There is the truly psychoanalytic realm of persistence of the past: a student with promise has been told that he or she is stupid by past teachers who, in turn, may have replicated parents who attacked the student. To disavow confidence may serve to maintain the feeling of love from a cruel figure in the student's past. Let us note especially the "selective perception" by which such students do not merely gravitate to teachers of certain personality types, but filter out certain aspects of any teacher which most approach the "type."

- Aside from conflict between and inside persons there is the fundamental difficulty of intellectual development. Any student who truly does what we ask is restructuring his mind, acquiring new mental habits, and that is terribly difficult. Anyone who has learned a foreign language as an adult knows this; I recall being in shock for a year, despite my best efforts, when the vicissitudes of the job market made it necessary for me to turn myself into an English linguist: I certainly did not understand transformational grammar for six months, although I worked on almost nothing else. The mental stress of learning may be a motive for "disavowal," which Laplanche and Pontalis define simply as "refusing to recognize the reality of a traumatic perception."(2)

- Finally, it is time for psychoanalysis to accept the wealth of sociolinguistics, ethnography of speaking, and semiotics as part of a social psychology. Here it is safe to say that *any* code-conflict between the student and the teacher may provoke enough anxiety to motivate disavowal as a defense. And here again the fact asserts itself that second-language students do not seem to act in this way; whatever conflicts they *do* experience, our second-language

students do not tend to have the types of conflicts which motivate the disavowal of intelligence.

Out of the Depths. . .

Therapeutic thinking encourages us to assume that we are working with our students' "Unconscious," with something very deep. Let us agree to take the term "deep Unconscious" as a spatial metaphor, as the locus of inborn human instincts and the domestication of those instincts to create a real person. If you believe Carl Jung, the Unconscious also contains memories of a racial evolution from animal to human.

Clearly, we college teachers are not involved with anything like this deep, instinctual Unconscious. We work with our students' fundamental ways of dealing with reality – with ego functions, if you like – and they are partly unconscious, but not deep like the instincts. I would illustrate this difference with a parable that David Rapaport tells precisely to differentiate the deep Unconscious from the mechanisms for dealing with reality:

> There was an Eastern King who heard about Moses. He heard that Moses was a leader of men, a good man, a wise man, and he wished to meet him. But Moses, busy wandering forty years in the desert, could not come. So the King sent his painters to Moses and they brought back a picture of him. The King called his phrenologists and astrologists and asked them, "What kind of man is this?" They went into a huddle and came out with a report which read: This is a cruel, greedy, self-seeking, dishonest man. The King was much puzzled. He said, "Either my painters do not know how to paint or there is no such science as astrology or phrenology." To decide this dilemma, he went to see Moses and after seeing him cried out, "There is no such science as astrology, or phrenology." When Moses heard this he was surprised and asked the king what he meant. The King explained, but Moses only shook his head and said, "No, your phrenologists and astrologists are right. That is what I was made of! I fought against it and that is how I became what I am."(3)

The point is that psychic depth is not equivalent to developed importance. We need not be in contact with the deep Unconscious to be doing something important, helping our students to develop. In fact, our case is stronger than that of Rapaport's parable, because as teachers we have no business with the students' deep Unconscious, while the development of the mechanisms for dealing with reality is very important, and nobody else may be contributing much to it except us teachers.

The Defense Mechanicisms of Idealization, Splitting, Denial, and Projective Identification

If you have ever watched ballet, hockey or a good kung fu movie, you know that to understand *how* the dancers, skaters and actors do it begins with understanding *what* they are doing. I would argue that this is true of expressive behavior, and that a good deal of effort in semiotics, ethnography and psychoanalysis is implementing structurally what New Criticism helped us to do with literature – to *slow down* the reading process and to understand what was being done at the most delicate levels as a route to understanding *how* it was done.

The student's behavior comes at us all at once, unified: psychoanalysis has named defense mechanisms with which to "decompose" the behavior: idealization, splitting and denial, and projective identification. They follow from the basic psychoanalytical assumption and seem to me to explain how the lack-of-confidence student acts: The student is disavowing intelligence after idealizing it, denying it in himself and perhaps projecting or attributing it somewhere else – into the other students who know all the answers and laugh at his dumb questions, into the wicked genius of the teacher, or into the books – these mechanisms are very common. Many of us will recall our own graduate school experience of feeling that we were stupid because the journal articles we read did not make sense, or burying ourselves in piles of 3 x 5 cards because the intelligence was in the books, not in us, and therefore it was safer to collect information than try to write something. The mechanism of idealization makes intelligence seem very intelligent and stupidity *very* stupid – which makes every draft of a paper or thesis the pursuit of the millennium, or the Last Judgment.

From these defenses follow four reasons for not interpreting student behavior:

1. Anyone who is practicing denial is not going to tell you so, and if you *make* him see what he is doing, he is going to feel or do something *worse* than denial. We must remember that this pattern of expression is a compromise *already*, probably the best the student can do at the moment, and we should not try to face it head-on, and certainly not try to take it away from him.

2. If the student is using idealization, our showing our wisdom by interpreting him to himself, regardless of how grateful he is at the moment, is only going to advance the idealization and splitting – we have all the brains, he has none.

3. Being interpreted, especially if one is not used to it, is frightening. Students may be even more frightened by getting interpreted by a *teacher*. It may seem like being possessed. Michael Balint, in *The Basic Fault*, has criticized interpretations by the Kleinian school on just these grounds: that they are too "deep" and immediately intimidating.(4)

4. Finally, a matter of ethics: as teachers we are not trained as therapists, we are not credentialed, and we are not "on call" as therapists are. We may provoke a sudden outburst of relief by interpreting, but every therapist knows that what matters is the long-term process, year after year, and that for many patients the darkest time is *after* the dawning of insight.

The Silent Hypothesis and the Adaptive Context

The analyst Robert Langs suggests we might use a "silent hypothesis": if you feel moved to interpret, if you see things, *do not* present them to the student, but hold them back.(5) By all means respond *pedagogically,* with a comment on the work or a grade, or an assignment, and look for the student to confirm or deny your interpretation with his next action. In other words, if you plan a teacherly response to a student, you should also predict to yourself what the student will do next.

Langs uses this concept of a "silent hypothesis" very delicately. He believes, for example, that the first words of a patient in a new psychoanalytic hour express the effect of the analyst's previous contribution. He treats the analyst's major or last response of the previous hour as the "adaptive context." Let me give you an example of my own: if I am too exuberant with a student and particularly if I *assume* that things are going well or are going to get better, I often get as the *opening* of the very next conversation an expression of panic about some *other* course or teacher. This is a displaced and unconscious response, but it is the most logical reaction one can imagine – while extolling the student's progress I had implicitly made light of the student's own low assessment of his capabilities and of his total picture! I am impressed by how much insight this concept of an adaptive context brings to all encounters, if only as the injunction to note carefully the first move that someone makes, and to see that it might be shaped by the previous interaction.

The Frame

As teachers, we need to define for ourselves pedagogic frames that we can live with and maintain – consisting of all the routine stuff, deadlines, traffic rules for class discussion, and so on. I am far less concerned at this point with what particular rules or procedures comprise a frame than that we *have* frames that we can hold under student pressure.

The concept of a frame is Langs' and follows from observations by the colleagues of Melanie Klein, chiefly Herbert Rosenfeld, of the functions of projective identification in therapy.(6) Patients will attack beneficent authority figures, sometimes to see if they can distract those figures so as to escape from them, sometimes because they feel that they deserve punishment, sometimes because they want to see whether they will really *not* be rejected, and, in the most moving instances, because they feel it is the only way that they can enable others to understand what they feel – by making them feel it. Those of you who are parents may see this in pre-schoolers and adolescents.

Under such pressure, having a frame gives us principled ways to respond. In turn, our relying on announced procedures and rules helps students to experience us as parts of external reality, rather than as parts of their psyches. If we are then called upon to absorb attempts to punish us, we can lean against our frames and let them absorb some of the pressure.

The Mundane-Ideal Parameter, and Successful Learning Without Confidence

If you have students or even whole classes that are disavowing their intelligence, you might design assignments which profoundly *de*-idealize and integrate. If you are teaching literature, collect observations, do metrics, do word-level stuff, get away from vision, psychology, politics, or anything millennial. Instead, write with them every day in class, do small stuff – anything to begin to build a pattern of ordinary, daily work, like basketball players practicing shots, or ask about Hamlet's effort to cope, or Daisy Miller's everyday life. What you would be doing with this is building patterns of work, habits and strengths, not feeding the idealization and worthlessness.

You might think of a parameter that ranges between the extremely mundane and the visionary and ideal:

Mundane ---------- Ideal

You can place any given assignment, class, or conference on this scale. As with a thermostat, you can raise or lower the setting. When the students display idealization and splitting, you can shift to the mundane end.

You can see that my title, "Successful Learning Without Confidence," was not facetious. The term "confidence" plays right into idealization, splitting and denial. The crucial thing is this: if you have a student "full of promise" who is not doing much, teach to the "not doing much" and not to the "promise." Try to see that the student is *not* "doing nothing" because your assignments are beneath him, unworthy of him, because he is bored – and therefore *do not* give him something *more* idealized. Boredom may be part

of the defense. It is very hard for us to recognize this, because a lot of us assume that if the students are not accomplishing much it is because *we* are not doing well. At times that is true, but not with this particular type of student. The response I would suggest is to drop the term "confidence" and any others like it, and just get the pens moving, get them turning their wheels like the Samsons Agonistes that, psychologically, in many ways they are.

Depth, Timing and Sequence of Comments

Rudolph Loewenstein suggested that analysts gauge their delivery of interpretation with parameters of depth, timing and sequence of interpretations. (7) These parameters apply to our written comments to students. We would agree that students are more susceptible to particular comments at different moments in the term, and if we catch them with the right one, it will open a future possibility. If we open with the wrong one, we will not make the same progress. In our work, the crucial question is this: what can a given student best absorb on a given day in relation to what the student has ahead of him to learn – given forty MWF class hours and as many assignments as we give?

Who Do We Get To Be?

"Confidence," then, is not necessary for learning. As I have argued, particular students may need to lack confidence, to feel unconfident as a compromise between their desire to pursue education and the inner or outer forces which demand that they stay the same. These students can accomplish a good deal to the extent that confidence can be dismissed as a requirement for learning, and this, I have argued, is possible when a teacher de-idealizes learning in general and the form and content of specific tasks. A student who feels unconfident can accomplish a good deal by way of routine assignments, growing stronger and, occasionally, being distracted by the pleasure of small accomplishments from his or her conflict.

Freud was pessimistic about social psychology, and he lumped healing and teaching with politics as "impossible professions" because those who are served could disappoint our best effort so terribly. If there is any doubt that psychoanalysis is a living discipline which grows from Freud's brilliance, let me mention a revision of Freud's "impossible profession" dictum which I found recently, by Clarence Oberndorf, an analyst from Alabama who helped edit two major psychoanalytic journals. (Oberndorf, by the way, is the source of the best and only psychoanalytic one-liner I have found: "The big trouble with a self-analysis," he says, "is counter-transference.") About our profession Oberndorf has said, "The minister, the teacher and the physician are persons

whose aim. . . is to alleviate suffering expeditiously and gently." (8) Psychotherapy and teaching are, I agree, the most fortunate professions because they offer virtually unlimited opportunities for observing human creativity, supporting it, and observing the results of intervention.

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Effective questioning depends on our students' study habits, their grasp of our vocabulary of inquiry, and their stages of intellectual development.

Asking Questions in the College Classroom

Nancy Hoffman

The Harvard-Danforth book *The Art and Craft of Teaching* begins with an amusing simile. "Teaching is like dropping ideas into the letter box of the unconscious. You know when they are posted but you never know when they will be received or in what form." When I first read it, it struck me in some grand way as absolutely right. All of us can recall the experience of having some dimly remembered and once confusing idea come suddenly into focus. Reading a book, musing on a train ride, pondering some crucial choice, suddenly the words of a teacher return with a clarity that startles us. "Ah ha, that's what she meant." In the terms of the simile, the letter has arrived. But the simile is also wrong. It portrays teaching as if it were a mysterious activity, inexplicable and chancy. Yes, we may have those wonderful moments of epiphany, but the daily business of the teacher is to know when her letters arrive, to send them again if they are lost, and to find some mutually understandable language in which to write them.

The standard way that teachers check to see if the postal system is working is to ask questions and solicit questions, to comment on and critique answers, to engage in dialogue, and, if you are lucky, to get students into discussion with each other. And yet if an anthropologist from another culture

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were to overhear and record the exchanges between teacher and student in many classrooms, she would be baffled by the odd form of discourse we practice:

> **Professor:** Would someone please explain dual labor market theory?
>
> **Carol:** Well, it's because women are always low paid. . . .
>
> **Professor:** hmmmm. . . Joe, you try.
>
> **Joe:** Well, in the nineteenth century, the country started to industrialize and. . .
>
> **Professor:** Let me stop you there, OK? That's history. Dual labor market theory postulates. . . .

The discontinuity between question and answers, the unfinished phrases, the interruptions would lead one to ask if professor and students were speaking the same language, had read the same articles, or, to return to the postal analogy, were engaging in a correspondence at all. And yet even in the liveliest of classrooms we hear such dialogue. In fact, the dialogue above comes from the classroom of one of the best teachers I've observed at UMass.

In the remarks that follow, I am going to dissect this exchange. But first a disclaimer. The approach I take here is practical. I ignore the big questions deliberately – changing the university, critiquing the hierarchical classroom model in which the teacher is the expert, arguing for experiential learning or against content. My remarks are directed toward those of us who assign readings and give lectures which we expect our students to write about on tests and in papers. For us, the question-answer process is the nexus between teaching and learning. This is the way we indicate what we think important or difficult or particularly intriguing; this is the way we get clues to what is going on in the minds of our students. If we are lucky, this is the way we excite our students about learning. But I am not so practical as simply to list questioning techniques. I don't know if I could. What follows is an attempt to establish a common understanding about certain aspects of learning which will help us ask questions and comprehend answers.

In the dialogue above, the teacher asks, "Would someone please explain dual labor market theory?" There's nothing particularly wrong with the question. In fact, it sounds like a straightforward attempt to get a student to remember something she has read in a book. That is, it doesn't call for analysis, interpretation, or application. The student should know the word "explain"

means to make an idea clear and intelligible, to talk about its parts. And since this is the fifth week of a class on economic theories, the student should know what "theory" is. But when Carol answers, she behaves as if the question were something like "Why are women in the secondary labor market?" She gives not an explanation but a right answer, the kind that would be appropriate in a multiple-choice test. Then what happens? The teacher, gentle soul, doesn't want to discourage Carol or make her feel stupid; so instead of saying, "You are wrong," or "I don't understand," or "Go on a little further," or some such phrase, he mumbles "hmmm" and moves to Joe, leaving Carol puzzled. He deals more firmly with Joe, stopping him, and labeling his answer as "history," but Joe, who may have been providing a context for further remarks, gets no help in understanding the difference between history and theory as categories, nor does he even get a chance to complete his sentence as one would in ordinary conversation.

Why does all this happen? First, the teacher has not helped these students establish the habit of doing the hard work of learning; second, the class has not agreed on a common vocabulary of inquiry; and third, some students may be too intellectually immature, too unaccustomed to academic thinking to deal with certain kinds of questions.

The Hard Work of Learning

In his article on questioning in *The Art and Craft of Teaching*, Thomas Kasulis suggests that teachers begin their classes with "fact" questions – warm-ups to see if everyone is alert, before the real stuff begins – interpretation, argument, and so forth. But that is not what I think UMass, or even Harvard students most need. Really, they need some hard work with the text or lecture; they need to establish the habit of checking reading comprehension and contextual knowledge before beginning the more glamorous discussion. This is work which students must do for themselves and each other, but it won't happen unless the teacher provides a structure for it. In teaching theory, we must make sure that students know what theory is. Carol is giving the teacher a clue which neither she nor the teacher should ignore. It seems pretty mundane, but that's the point.

In a feminist theory course last semester, we began each two-and-a-half-hour meeting with "warm-ups" for fifteen minutes or a half hour. Here are some ideas I use frequently. In the class previous to the discussion of an assigned reading, I ask specific students or groups of students to take on the following tasks: 1) List all the vocabulary you had to look up, concentrating on words that are conceptual – the dictionary will tell you that "bourgeoisie" means the middle class, but you need to know more when reading Marx. The same goes for "theory." 2) Find five places in the text that were difficult to

understand, that got you stuck, and try to explain them; try to identify your problem in understanding. 3) Write ten questions that you used at home to test your own understanding. Such warm-ups result in focussing student attention not on getting the right answer, but on identifying the places where work is needed; the entire class is engaged in mucking around with texts, ferreting out their problems. Talking only about the right answers that we know and hiding the puzzles is an attitude we too often encourage in our students. This then is what I call the hard work needed to begin learning. Furthermore, when the students present such work to the class, the teacher is privileged to listen to minds at work. She has immediate feedback on the fit between material and student capacity, and valuable clues to help her to identify patterns of difficulty.

In an interesting article which takes a psycho-analytic perspective on the teaching of composition – it is called "Learning Without Confidence" – UMass English department member Neal Bruss adds another reason for doing this kind of work with students. Such assignments, in Bruss's view help students who "are getting caught up in disavowing their intelligence," who feel safer separating themselves from idealized "academic achievers." To "de-idealize" learning from time to time helps students who lack intellectual confidence to build a pattern of ordinary, daily work, like practicing foul shots at the net (not the simile I would have used, but a nice one.)

A Common Vocabulary of Inquiry

I would venture that the teacher in our much belabored dialogue has not established with her students a common vocabulary of inquiry, a way of describing different kinds of intellectual operations that she will expect students to perform in class discussion and on exams. As you most likely know, there are lively debates among cognitive and developmental psychologists about the appropriate terms for reasoning skills and about a hierarchy of those skills. But I have come to believe that whether teachers know what common sense suggests, that argument is more complex than analysis, which is more complex than description, it is more important that they know enough to provide students with clear working definitions of each mode as it is introduced. When asking students recently to evaluate a theory – the most difficult task of my course – we discussed the change in our mode of inquiry. One student suggested, "Let's talk again about how this is different from a main-idea paper." "Can we have small groups before the end of class," asked another; "I still need to go over some concepts." Deeper into the labyrinth, but the beginning of self-conscious learning.

But no matter how many warm-ups you do and no matter how explicit you are about your vocabulary of inquiry, some students are bound to get

"wrong" answers, to make mysterious contributions to discussions. Some of these mysterious contributions will be wonderfully revealing, but others will merely puzzle and frustrate. They will be repeated, no matter how hard you try to reshape or dissect them. Academia requires and values modes of thinking which are foreign to many students, and it is our task to be conscious of this, and to understand that we cannot expect students' minds to be junior versions of our own. It is also important for us to keep fully in mind a very simple observation: students do not choose to give wrong or mysterious answers; if they could give right answers, they certainly would.

There are two fields of inquiry which have been helpful to me in understanding and working with student error: basic writing and developmental psychology. You may know *Errors and Expectations,* Mina Shaughnessy's 1977 study of the writing of students entering the CUNY system under open admissions. Through painstaking analysis and categorization of what seemed at first garbled writing, she began to discern patterns – what she brilliantly describes as a *logic of error* – which if known to teachers would reveal a strategy for improvement. In the introduction to the book, she explains about beginning writers, "There is very little that is random or illogical in what they have written. And the keys to their development as writers often lie hidden in the very features of their writing that English teachers have been trained to brush aside with a marginal code letter or a scribbled injunction to proofread! Such strategies ram at the doors of their incompetence while the keys that would open them lie in view." If we apply this perspective to our student Carol, we then ask what are the keys to her answer, "because women are low paid." Carol has not yet mastered the concept "theory," but she has grasped in part a phenomenon that dual labor market theory seeks to explain – the low pay of women. (She probably *is* a low paid woman.) To borrow a phrase from two Wellesley psychologists who are working on women's intellectual development, the teacher should treat Carol's answer not as an error, but as a first draft of a right answer. She must ask Carol questions that help her to draw a distinction between theory which is abstract and the data that theory seeks to explain. Like many students, Carol will need practice before she can grasp and apply abstract thought.

Those researchers concerned with categorizing phases or positions in a scheme of intellectual development have something more to tell us about Carol – she may insist on giving three-word "right" answers and asking what the teacher wants for a period of months or years. Asked to make an argument for a perspective that the teacher has criticized, she may insist that this is impossible. In her literature courses, she may talk about characters as if they were real people who came into being by no choice of the author. She may be able to tell you why a *character* said "I detest you" to her husband, but not what the *author* meant by it.

The best known of the developmentalists is not a psychologist at all but a classicist who worked at the Harvard Bureau of Study Counsel. William Perry observed and categorized the intellectual and ethical "positions" of students moving through four years of undergraduate education. Briefly, these positions are: dualism (things are either good or bad, right or wrong, authorities tell the truth); multiplicity (all opinions are equal, how can I decide, and better, what right has my professor to decide about me); relativism or contextualism – the position we love (multiple competing perspectives must be considered in context and evaluated, I must think about thinking); and, finally, commitment (despite doubt, I must decide what is right and act on it.) The central task of the college years, Perry believes, is to deal complexly with the richness of intellectual conflict and difference. But many students arrive ill-prepared to do so; it isn't until several semesters or years have passed that they begin, happily, to lose their need for authority, and the one right answer. There is a growing literature on patterns and styles of intellectual development and I believe it will prove fruitful to college teachers.

What has Perry's work to do with forms of questioning? In order for students to become more than right-answer people, telling us what they think we have said, they must learn to think about thinking so that they can evaluate for themselves the differing views presented to them. They need to ask and answer not the question "What is right?," but "Why is this right?" Although Carol is probably a dualist who comes from a background where difference was dismissed rather than valued, her development can be encouraged by practice with questions that pose competing ideas, concepts, and theories against each other. We can call it compare and contrast, or more sophisticatedly, binary opposition or dialectical thinking, but from the teacher's perspective the idea is to create dissonance in Carol's mind, to put her in a position where she cannot easily seek a right and a wrong answer. One hopes that in her economics class, she will eventually be asked to sort out two competing explanations of why women are in the secondary labor market. That is, once the hard work of checking for comprehension of texts and lectures becomes a habit, students should start working at the skills of comparison. These are the skills which help them see complexity and ambiguity not as threats, but as puzzles. These are among the key skills that underlie critical thinking.

To sum up then, we need to have work sessions with our students to establish a basic understanding of material through questions we and they ask; we need to establish with them a mutually understood vocabulary for talking about thinking; we need to appreciate their errors and try to find the logic in them; and we need to challenge students with powerful and conflicting viewpoints that raise questions in all our minds.

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Because of their relative isolation from other students, commuting students need a course syllabus that reminds them of an intellectual context for their assignments.

Writing a Syllabus for Commuters

James H. Broderick

My title does not mean that I expect faculty to provide subway reading when they pass out their syllabi, nor that the kinds of syllabus I advocate will be of use only to commuting students. My topic is the ways faculty can make a syllabus a more important part of a course than it traditionally has been in residential universities.

The traditional syllabus appeared recently in ideal form in a description by Richard Fraher in *The Art and Craft of Teaching:*

> The ideal course syllabus tells the student everything he or she wants to know about the course. . . The bare minimum for a syllabus includes identification of the course and of the teacher, an outline of the material to be presented in class, a list of required readings, and a schedule of the assignments required in the course. Optional materials, which some teachers omit, include the location of the teacher's office, the phone number, a schedule of office hours, a list of recommended supplementary readings, and any material relevant to course assignments: problem sets, case materials, suggestions for term papers, etc.

J.H. Broderick (ed.). *Teaching at an Urban University*, Center for the Improvement of Teaching, UMass/Boston, 1987.

Most of Fraher's requirements were, in fact, met by my own undergraduate course syllabi during World War II, except that in some cases the syllabus also gave the sequence of titles for each of the professor's lectures. I used the syllabi to get my books, plan my work, and sometimes choose which lectures I could miss.

I still have most of them, and they are orderly and accurate. How helpful they were I now doubt. They seem to me skeletal, impersonal. And yet I must confess that they have served for decades as models for courses I have taught. When I came to UMB, to be sure, I went with the Zeitgeist of the late sixties and early seventies and added more information and less formal, more democratic comments and some options in the readings and the assigned papers. But substantially my syllabi were of a piece with Fraher's traditional model.

What I was forgetting as I wrote those syllabi, or at least not taking into account, was the extent to which my own work in college had been supported by a group of fellow students I saw regularly in the dining hall and in our rooms and by ready access to an excellent, small, open-shelf library. In a real sense I didn't need much more than the lectures and the kind of guideline-syllabus always provided. At UMB the commuting students, I knew, were both isolated from each other and from good small libraries; but even when my efforts failed to defend from budgetary cuts the small libraries and student lounges in our Master Plan for a new campus, my course syllabi made no adjustment to the lack of these advantages.

These traditional syllabi were orderly, as I have said, and in the English courses I took so many of, that order was almost always the order of history. The Shakespeare plays appeared in the best approximate chronology; we read Wordsworth before Keats, Tennyson before T.S. Eliot. Even if dates, sources and influences had not been emphasized in the lectures I attended, the syllabi would have instructed me about the one order my professors agreed upon. After the War, however, most Americans found the history of England and its corollary history of English Literature less significant. I accordingly emphasized social and economic issues rather than parliamentary and religious history; but I didn't change the basic format of my syllabi.

In a Ford Seminar in 1985, I found myself looking closely at a syllabus for the Political Economy of Black America, and another for Karl Marx's Marxism. I found them discursive and confusing as syllabi; I couldn't just scan them, I had to read them. The Marxism syllabus gave for each week a topic in the reading assignments (e.g., Project of Emancipation, the 1844 MSS, Historical Materialism.) The syllabus also included other information, about deadlines, Incompletes, plagiarism. Along with the syllabus, however, the instructor provided a seven-page outline of the topics in the readings, a three-page Glossary of Marx's terms and a single sheet identifying symbols used in

Marxist formulas. I was delighted to get my hands on the clear and relatively brief Glossary, which I had needed for a long time; and my interest in the Glossary made me realize how well the whole syllabus supported and stimulated the students' progress through the writings of Marx. If a student missed a class or two, he or she could use the syllabus to make independent sense of the next set of readings.

The syllabus in the Political Economy of Black America went further. First of all, it began with a full course description from the catalogue. Then it offered "Learning Objectives," which at first sounded like educationese to me. But as I read those six objectives, I found that they specified things that the students should be able to do when they completed the course, things like "Describe and evaluate the conservative, liberal and radical explanation for the economic condition of blacks," that seemed clear and sensible. The syllabus also included a long topical outline of the course and a one-page set of guidelines for the papers. What most struck me about this syllabus was the way the inclusion of the "Learning Objectives" made the whole syllabus an answer to the unavoidable student question "Why should I take this course?" Those objectives also articulated clear criteria by which student performance in the course would be judged. And here was something students could return to, especially before exams or papers, and reorient themselves and not be swayed, for instance, by the fact that the most recent class discussion had focused on black sexism.

Clearly the "Learning Objectives" highlighted the student bias I had found in the Marxism syllabus, and I realized that most traditional syllabi offer a clear and orderly account of the professor's "Teaching Objectives." In my new sense of things I understood that an historical sequence, even a topical outline, mainly offered the professor assurance that all the relevant "material" would be "covered." The "Learning Objectives" were perforce *student* objectives.

All this challenged me to try to make my advanced course that term more student-oriented and the syllabi user-friendly and, if possible, heuristic. Perhaps I set my sights too high, and it certainly took me a long while to rethink even the syllabus for the course, The Principles and Methods of Literary Criticism. The title of that course notwithstanding, the emphasis or at least the order of the course had been largely historical; as the catalogue said, "The course explores and defines major issues in literary study by close examination of major critical writings from Aristotle to modern times." And I wasn't ready to jettison the basic historical sequence. But what the Marxism course had taught me was that the "Principles and Methods" should be explicit and operative in the syllabus. What the Black Economics course taught me was that the whole thing should become a stimulus and vade mecum for the students.

(It is only fair to my former pedagogic self and to those who taught me, to say now that there are good reasons, especially in the Humanities, for avoiding tight conceptual schemes (categorical imperatives) which could encourage students to think of terms like Neo-Classical or Romantic as fixed and factual, to treat them as labels and not as complex and limiting concepts, most valuable when used with some sophistication. When I compare my graduate experience at Chicago and Harvard, I see reasons for Harvard's reliance on history rather than the more intrusive Aristotelian schema at Chicago in the late forties. But this is an aside.)

In revising the Criticism syllabus, I decided that I wanted to provide some clues about each assigned reading besides its general grouping as Ancient or Romantic or whatever. While hardly exclusively apt for each of the critics, the clues might help students orient themselves or stir their curiosity. So, within each general grouping I provided clues under "Author's tactic to be noted in class" and "Author's issue to be noted in class." And I also offered a third heading, "Historical Context." All of the headings were referred to by students in class discussions at one time or other, most often early in the class meetings as part of a question about the reading. But "Historical Context" by itself produced by midterm a request that I provide more historical background, a brief Annals of English Literature.

Before I go any further let me briefly illustrate the change with a portion of the Schedule section of the syllabus, with dates omitted.

1977

The Classical Tradition:	Aristotle (Bate,1-39) Plato (Bate, 39-49) Horace (Bate, 49-58) Longinus (Bate, 59-75)

1985

Author	Assigned Reading	Historical Context	Author's tactic to be noted in class	Author's issue to be noted in class
Plato	Bate, 39-49	5th-cent. Athens	Semantic analysis	Moral judgment of literature
Aristotle	Bate, 13-39	Plato's idealist critique of poets	Categorical Analysis	A complete descriptive classification
Horace	Bate, 49-58	Rome of Augustus	Rule-giving	Decorum
Longinus	Bate, 59-75	Classical Rhetorics	Appeal to the reader's emotions	Definition by a single quality

Once I had thought through the problem of how students isolated from their fellows began their reading of each author and I devised my schematic Schedule, I realized that I too should provide "Learning Objectives." Once articulated, these in turn shaped my paper assignments and the exams; I found that I wanted students to turn in weekly one-page, open-topic reader-responses to the readings to keep me continuously aware of how the students, apart from their responses in class, where my agenda dominated, were moving toward those objectives. I decided to give an A to all reader-responses turned in on time and to grade down only for late, missing or untyped papers. For my part, I agreed to turn the responses back at the next class with extensive comments on the contents. The reader-responses led inevitably to a final paper on one of the Learning Objectives: to be able to discover the principles and methods in any unfamiliar critical essay. For that I handed out an anonymous short critical essay on the last day of class; the paper was due as the take-home portion of the final exam.

Here I should acknowledge that there are dangers in so "systematic" a syllabus. Without frequent, deliberate recourse to what actually happened the last time the course was given, syllabus-making can become an end in itself. If our "Learning Objectives," for instance, are padded or too lean, they won't help students very much and can blind us to exam questions and paper assignments that are inappropriate.

I won't rehearse here the other specific changes in my syllabus, for the main point is already clear, that once I set about reorienting the syllabus for my commuting students and trying to make it as useful as the Black Economics and the Marxism syllabi were, I found myself rethinking the way the whole course was structured. But my experience was limited to an advanced course, and the needs of introductory and intermediate students differ somewhat. One could argue as Rus Hart does in his essay on "Course Rhythms, Learning Structures, Teaching Styles" that for students who are embarking on a new field of study the syllabus should foster their sense of the "romance" of learning in that field – its scope, its fascination, its challenges. The specific tactics and issues "to be noted in class" in my Criticism course might be out of place in an introductory syllabus. There the full outline of course topics which the Marxism syllabus provided would be more useful and also allow the instructor freer range in making up the headings: that is, in a course in The Psychology of Women, in addition to the heading "Gender Identity Development," the instructor could ask, "In accounting for gender development, how much weight should be given to physiology as against socialization (family, schools, church, etc.)?" Or the professor could introduce challenging quotations, for instance, adding to "The Lost Generation" in an American Literature syllabus Hemingway's own comment, "I thought we were beat-up . . . Lost, no . . . We were a very solid generation."

In introductory or intermediate courses that depend heavily on a standard textbook, as in Marketing Research or Biology, the syllabus writers have an even more difficult task. They have chosen those textbooks precisely because their pacing, explanations and scope were appropriate for their students. These professors are therefore often tempted simply to make the Schedule of Reading Assignments a sequence of page numbers. But if, as I discovered in redoing my Criticism syllabus, commuting students in particular need the multiple commentary and perspective traditionally available to residential students in the voices of other students, a syllabus in a "textbook course" should suggest other perspectives. At the very least the professor's own language or terminology should intrude if not dominate; this means little more than that some of the professor's in-class commentary should be partly revealed in the syllabus to help students approach the reading and prepare for class. And where, as in a Marketing Research course I know, the textbook is unavoidably insistent, the instructor provides topical exercises and questions for students at the end of every set of reading assignments.

In short, in almost any kind of course at any level, the professor should design the syllabus for the students' use after class, after job, among their family, a syllabus that will supply an intellectual context for completing the assigned work. Until the students' intellectual life is so firmly established that they find themselves frequently in internal dialogue with compelling voices in their field, whether Samuelson or Lessing or Malraux, most commuting students will suffer from a diminished sense of intellectual context for their academic work. If we think of all the materials we supply students throughout the term in our courses, sample good papers, supplementary reading lists, bibliographies, outlines, whatever, they all constitute a countertextbook, probably more effective distributed piece by piece as occasion warrants (and certainly easier to produce at that rate); and the syllabus is only the first segment of that volume. The traditionalists like Fraher say that the syllabus should present everything that the students need to know; but they do not go far enough. For commuting students the syllabus should be more than a full account of the professor's agenda; it should approach a learner's manual.

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